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ABSTRACT

This document presents 11 papers that consider the problems and opportunities relating to the design and implementation of training programs for foreign teaching assistants (FTAs): "Academic Sub-cultures within U.S. Higher Education: Implications for FTA Training of Differences in Teaching Styles and Methods" (Patricia Byrd); "Cross-cultural Awareness: Understanding Ourselves and Sensitivity to Others" (Lynne A. McNamara); "Background Issues in Testing and Evaluation of Foreign Teaching Assistants" (Janet C. Constantinides); "Gaining and Maintaining Campus-wide Support for an International Teaching Assistant Training Program" (Jane Averill, Dave Clark, Lynne McNamara); "Oral Interview for International Graduate Assistants" (Ralph Pat Barrett); "Video-taped Teaching Simulations: Issues in the Testing and Evaluation of Foreign Teaching Assistants" (Patricia Byrd); "Clarification of Terms in FTA Training," "Information Classification System," and "Foreign TA Training Programs: An Overview of Design Components and Comparison Chart of FTA Program Formats," "Training Foreign TA's - Pedagogical Teaching Skills: A Matrix System to Target FTA Training" (Claire K. Langham); "Five Phases in a Training Program" (Claire K. Langham); and "ITAs and the Road to Communicative Competence: Learning to Map a Department" (Debra-L Sequeira). References are provided for most papers. (GLR)

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Wyoming Institute on
Foreign TA Training

July, 1986

WORKING PAPERS

Volume I

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Janet C. Constantinides, Editor

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

In July, 1986, a dozen of us gathered at the University of Wyoming for the Wyoming Institute on Foreign TA Training to consider problems and opportunities relating to the design and implementation of training programs for foreign teaching assistants (FTAs). We represented both public and private universities from eight states (see participant list at the end of this volume). These papers are the result of our deliberations.

The papers are in different formats and type faces because they were produced by the individuals indicated at different places and times during the past few months. Errors are the responsibility of each author; no editing as possible. Some of the papers represent only the beginnings of ideas while other present highly polished drafts. But all of these are, in fact, drafts--papers on the way to becoming something more than they are here. I ask you to remember that as you read them.

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SECTION 1 - BACKGROUND PAPERS

During the first two days of the 1986 Wyoming Institute on Foreign TA Training, three background papers were presented. These were intended to "set the scene" by taking stock of what had been done and what the research showed (if there was any research), and to identify areas that the participants of the Institute might want to investigate.

This section contains revised versions of those presentations. Pat Byrd considers what we need to know about the variety of teaching tasks assigned to FTAs and what we may not have considered in planning the pedagogical section of a training program. Lynne McNamara's presentation on cultural awareness covered basic prinicples which, on the surface, may seem obvious, but which sparked much discussion during the rest of the Institute. Janet C. Constantinides, filling in for a presenter who was taken ill, raised questions about the adequacy of existing tests and pointed to some directions that might be followed in arriving at new and better testing methods.

Academic Sub-cultures within U.S. Higher Education: Implications for FTA Training Of Differences in Teaching Styles and Methods

Patricia Byrd

Georgia State University

Before reading further, take a few minutes to make two lists--the first of the majors of the foreign graduate teaching assistants (FTAs) at your institution and the second of the courses that they are likely to teach.

From the beginning, we need to think specifically about our audience and their audiences. If your list is like that of many of our colleagues, the majors of the FTAs include primarily scientific and technical areas--physics, mathematics, computer science, business, economics, biology, chemistry. It might, however, very well include foreign languages, music, history, political science, education, and even English literature. The list of courses taught probably includes introductory courses in mathematics, chemistry, computer science, and so forth. First year foreign languages are also frequently taught by FTAs.

During the first testing of foreign students who were being considered for teaching assistantships at Georgia State, I was made aware of the enormous difference between the methods of teaching valued in ESL and the methods valued in the academic departments of these graduate students. All of them were Ph.D. students who had been in the U.S. for several years. Very nearly all of them used the same teaching method in the video-taped simulation test: using an

overhead projector to project material on a screen, they turned their backs to the "class" and talked to the screen. Since they were all trying to pass the test by doing the best teaching possible, I had to conclude that this was the way they thought teachers should act. In fact, this was probably the way they had been taught in their graduate classes. My perception was that the teaching methods that I had learned to value in teaching ESL were not being used in other departments. That same spring I co-taught a graduate course in the Teaching of English as a Second Language. We decided to force our graduate students to take responsiblity for the class by our refusing in the first session to take part in the discussion. We selected readings; we primed student discussion leaders in pre-class sessions; but once the class began, we sat on the outside of the circle and refused to comment. These American ESL teachers were extremely uncomfortable; this was not the way to run a class. Gradually most of the students came to appreciate the system--and gradually we were welcomed into the group. I realized that the academic experience of these American students--like the academic experience of the FTAs--had not prepared them to expect, accept, or appreciate student-centered classes.

Both of these experiences led me to a clearer understanding of something I had dimly suspected before: the methods and manner of teaching valued and promoted by ESL teacher-trainers and language-teaching specialists differ significantly from the methods and manner approved of and practiced in other parts of the university. The teaching strategies and student-teacher relationships that are most valued by ESL specialists include:

1) student-centered classes,

2) focus on communication by students in

3) activities designed by teacher who takes the role of

4) organizer/supervisor/resource person.

5) paired and small group activities in classes of no more than 20 students,

6) classes that aim to improve communication skills rather than knowledge of content.

The teacher is an insider teaching a group of cultural and linguistic outsiders.

In contrast, FTAs are teaching in a radically different environment in which:

1) the teacher is a lecturer;

2) content is the main focus;

3) classes are frequently quite large--45-50 students, and

4) small groups are seldom used during the regular class (discussion groups are sometimes used but not during the lecture time); and

5) the teacher is knower/explainer/giver of information.

For foreign TAs, the teacher is an outsider teaching a group of cultural and linguistic insiders.

Bailey (1982) reports on the characteristics of TAs who get high student evaluations. Her research results in descriptions that sound familiar to ESL teachers: interactive teaching style, on-task humor, relaxed relationships with students, well-organized presentations, helpfulness, etc. BUT we are applying these terms in a sub-culture much different from the world of ESL teaching. "Breakfast" seems like a tie that binds until you get to another country and try to find your cornflakes. Similarly, interaction in a section of college algebra is most likely not the same as interaction in an ESL course.

These comparisons lead to three major issues. First, what preparation and experience should the teacher of an FTA training course have? Second, what is

the appropriate training for that FTA--what should the content of the FTA training course be? Third, what standards should be set for the FTA in screening tests and who should be setting those standards?

Constantinides and Byrd (1986) observed that few ESL teachers are now teaching or have ever taught U.S. undergraduates. The point is that ESL teachers will need special training to learn about the teaching methods and manner needed by the FTAs and the ESL specialist who designs an FTA training program must be careful to provide instruction that prepares the FTA for what awaits him/her in the person of the U.S. undergraduate. At the same time, the specialists who help U.S. faculty improve their teaching skills (in the enhancement of instruction programs available on many campuses) have little or no training in the teaching of ESL. While much of the published research indicates that the FTAs have problems much wider than just the "bad pronunciation" they are accused of, FTA training programs do need to include a significant amount of language training. Indeed, for students from some language backgrounds, FTA programs will need to include lengthy training in pronunciation and other aspects of spoken English. We are finding, unfortunately, that while many graduate students from oriental backgrounds, especially Korean and Chinese, can read (and do multiple choice tests) well enough to succeed quite well in graduate school, they cannot make themselves understood in spoken English. (A larger number than one might expect have severely limited ability to communicate in academic writing.) In sum, whatever direction an institution goes to find training for its FTAs, the training program will more than likely need to include inservice training for its own instructors.

The development of FTA training has revealed how little is known about the teaching methods and manner of the various academic disciplines. The

8. Are there differences in the assignments given faculty of different ranks? (For example, do full professors teach fewer classes than assistant professors?)

9. How many support staff are there in the department?

Administrative assistants

Secretaries

Technicians

Clerks

Others (indicate their positions)

10. With which of the staff will you be expected or will you need to interact? What sort of interaction is needed in each case?

	Name	Position	Interaction
A.			
B.			
C.			
D.			
E.			

****

Directory of Your Department

Discussion Activity

Make a chart to collect names, etc., for key people in your department. Discuss with other students in the training course the ways that you got this information and any additional things that you learned about your department or the university while you were filling in the form.

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Activities similar to this have been found useful in FTA training at the University of Washington (Sequeira: 1987).

In addition, we must use extreme care in pushing an FTA to use teaching methods not approved of in his/her department--foreign TAs cannot lead the educational revolution. This warning must be heeded by the teaching-enhancement specialist as much as by the ESL specialist: your institution's development of a center for the improvement of instruction does not mean that a department will let foreigners (or graduate students) take the lead in changing traditional modes of instruction. Foreign TAs are considered strange enough already without our teaching them to behave in unacceptable ways.

FTA training programs must be designed so that they can quickly be changed as we learn more about the needs of the FTA. We are at the very beginnings of our understanding of the communicative and pedagogical skills needed for success as teachers of undergraduate courses. A danger of legislative mandates is that the lawmakers could be overly specific in their requirements, binding us to tests and methods that we later find ineffective.

It is traditional for discussions such as this to end with calls for further research. At least in this situation, the call is sent forth with urgency. Too much is at stake for our institutions and for the FTA for us to dither and dillydally in our search for accurate information and effective programming. We must soon have descriptions of valued teaching methods and styles in various academic disciplines. The list that we made at the beginning of this discussion suggests the enormous task this research project will entail. A possible reward for success in this enterprise is that as experts on academic teaching we might be able to influence our institutions to improve the teaching skills of all faculty and graduate teaching assistants--American as well as foreign.

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CROSS-CULTURAL AWARENESS: Understanding Ourselves and Sensitivity to Others

By Lynne A. McNamara

Introduction

The presentation begins with a Questionnaire for the participants in which they survey their own experience with regard to multi-cultural awareness. After completing this personal inventory, a discussion is conducted about culture and its meanings. This leads into an experiential involvement in a foreign language which initiates discussion about communication. Finally, multi-cultural issues are presented which affect the Foreign Teaching Assistant in an American university setting.

Self-Analysis of Multi-Cultural Awareness

Awareness of the behaviors and feelings of others from another culture can be developed through experience, exposure, and education. One of the many steps to cross-cultural awareness is acquiring a knowledge about ourselves: recognition of our own behaviors and feelings open us to recognizing and understanding others, whether they are from our own culture or from another.

Personal experience makes a great difference in the perceptions one has about an "other-cultured" individual. If one has traveled or lived abroad, they have been exposed to another way of living, eating, working, dating and marrying, raising children, and communicating, to name just a few encounters with life situations. Studying a second language or actually speaking it fluently changes the way we think and the way we express our ideas to others. The publications we read and the friends we have all influence our acceptance of the other-cultured person.

To assess the multi-cultural framework which each person has, a simple personal survey can be given and scored. Such a survey is seen in Addendum 1. With the highest score as 100, an individual can add the numbers circled and rate himself or herself to see what level of cross-cultural sophistication they may already have. Such a survey could be useful with a group of Americans who may have varying degrees of cross-cultural experience. Discussion could follow the assessment to point out how each experience contributes to one's openness to, and understanding of, people from another culture.

Culture--a Definition

Each individual may give a definition of "culture," whether with a capital "C" or with a small "c." It's useful to share these personal interpretations of the word which are based in part on educated definitions, but are primarily based on one's own experience and emotions. Some of the following expressions bring up a multitude of meanings and center around the word "culture": acculturation, your/my culture, one has/doesn't have culture, a cultured person, the culture of a country/society, cross/multi-cultural, a personal/corporate culture. A group setting offers an educational opportunity to get varying examples for the different "cultures" that each individual would have in their family, community, region, and state.

There may not be complete agreement among members of a group with the following definitions of "culture," but these definitions can form the basis of a beginning core of understanding.

> 'Culture is that...complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.' (E.B.Tylor, Primitive Culture, 1972)

> 'Culture is the totality of learned, socially transmitted behavior." (Keesing, Cultural Anthropology: The Science of Custom, 1958)

Bringing one to an awareness of the multitude of definitions, of usages, and of settings in which culture is apparent is in itself an important step to becoming "culturally literate."

A Simulated Foreign-Language Experience

What is it like to experience being in a group of people and not understand the language that is being spoken? And then, what if you're asked to perform some task? You don't know exactly what it is...something with a pencil and a pen? You have to get one...no...take one...no...both to another person. How did you understand just those simple ideas?

Such an exercise is frustrating, but revealing. One learns how much they rely on body language: the facial expressions, the hand movements, the bending of the body. A general discussion can ensue about body language differences in each culture. For example, each

culture "talks" by the way they touch, greet, sit and stand near others, and walk together. Douglas said: "The words alone mean very little. Verbal symbols depend on the speaker manipulating his whole environment to get the meaning across." (Implicit Meanings & Essays in Anthropology, 1975)

Participants also learn how much they rely on their fellow friends in the group by watching carefully how another person interacts and reacts with the one speaking the strange tongue. Furthermore, one can understand how much communication happens through tone of voice and through simple intonation patterns. The participant adjusts with some hesitancy to the language and can even begin to pick up some sounds and words that can be identified with objects and actions.

An additional step in such an exercise is to actually teach two or three phrases in the foreign language, getting each student to properly imitate not only the sounds and intonation, but also the body language that accompanies the expressions.

A discussion following the foreign language experience brings out the emotions that the individuals felt. Common feelings are stupidity, insecurity, helplessness, anger, frustration, like a baby. A positive and desired result of this exercise is an insight into how some of our foreigner visitors feel when they are first learning our language.

The Communication Part of the Multi-Cultural Communication

Is it just an understanding of the other culture? Or is it that and an understanding of the language of that culture? Or is it really about something else?

One has certain expectations about the language they hear and the situation. If you are in a restaurant, you would not expect a postman to come to your table to take your order. Nor would you expect a waiter to ask you about a choice of colors for your salad. If those instances would occur, you would be shocked. In Italy when they answer the phone, they immediately ask, "Who's talking?" In the United States, that would be considered an insult if that was the first thing you heard. Our expectation is different.

When we are in another culture or dealing with people from other cultures, we have to give up some of those expectations in order to permit the intent to be heard and understood. One must be present to the speaker; presence is total openness to what the individual is saying. There is no criticism or analysis; there is acceptness and interest. This is also considered active listening; one is actively listening to the words for the thought and intention of the speaker. These skills will better enable us to communicate with others from

our own cultural background and are essential to multi-cultural communications.

The Issues

The foreign Teaching Assistant in the American university classroom elicits a multitude of issues. These issues are to be solved not only by the foreign TA, but als by the community in which he participates. Fellow colleagues, department administration, and American students all have a role to play in solving the problem. As a beginning, some of the issues are presented in Addendum 2 for a quick reference. These topics show how multi-cultural communications are an essential part of solving the foreign TA issues on our campuses.

Addendum 1

Multicultural Communications

A Personal Questionnaire

By Lynne McNamara

University of Wyoming Institute on Training Foreign TAs, Summer 1986

DIRECTIONS. Circle the number which most closely describes your own experience.

1 = Very little/ Not at all 3 = Somewhat/ Some time 5 = A lot, very much/ Long time

1. Traveling to Mexico and Canada has been a part of my life.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Traveling to countries not contiguous with the U.S. has been a part of my life.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I am fluent in another language besides English.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I am fluent in a third language besides English.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Studying in a foreign college or university was part of my undergraduate or graduate experience.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I have lived in a non-English speaking country.	1	2	3	4	5
7. My close friends include foreigners.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Neighbors with whom I communicate are non-native Americans.	1	2	3	4	5
9. When I have a party, I invite foreigners.	1	2	3	4	5
10. My correspondence includes non-Americans that I have met during my life.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I am a second-generation American.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Some of my family members have married foreigners.	1	2	3	4	5

Questionnaire

13. Publications in my home include periodicals such as National Geographic, Newsweek (or Time, U.S. News & World Report), and The Economist.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I have been a host family or homestay family for foreign visitors or students.	1	2	3	4	5
15. NAFSA and SIETAR are professional organizations to which I belong.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Fellow colleagues or students with whom I have associated have been/are foreigners.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I have read books and articles on multi-cultural communication.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Some of my course-work in college was about different cultures.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I have spent my free time with Americans from ethnic backgrounds other than my own (Anglo, Black, Hispanic, Asian, for example).	1	2	3	4	5
20. Familiarity with the politics and economics of other countries is a value to me.	1	2	3	4	5

* * * * * * *

Addendum 2

Issues regarding

CROSS-CULTURAL ORIENTATION
and
THE FOREIGN TEACHING ASSISTANT

1. The foreign TA's familiarity with the American educational system:

   + Time frames: in the classroom, through the academic year
   + Testing and grading
   + Professionalism
   + Interpersonal and professional relationships
     --At the classroom level
     --Departmental
     --Within the College or School
     --Within the institution as a whole
   + Administrative procedures
   + Academic advising
   + The American student

2. The American student's/colleagues' awareness of other cultural systems:

   + Past traveling, living, studying outside the U.S.
   + Speaking, reading, writing another language
   + Friends who are non-native speakers, foreigners
   + Relatives from another country; family ties abroad
   + Research, study, interest in other countries

3. Orientation programs for/by whom? (and when & where?)

   + Foreign TAs
   + American students and TAs
   + College and university faculty and staff
   + ESL faculty and staff
   + TESL program administrators

4. Defining the American educational system's expectations of TAs

   + According to the American students
   + From the point of view of the school's administration
     --Departmental
     --College or School
     --Institutional
   + What the TA expects
   + According to the American tax-paying public

5. Cross-cultural communication problems between the FTA and

   + his/her students
   + the department
   + the administration
   + the public
   + the parents

6. Cross-cultural communication needs analysis of a particular campus

7. Internationalizing a campus community

8. Improvement within higher education of teaching

    + Accountability

    + Consumerism

    + All ranks from TA to Professor

    + The need acknowledged by academia

9. Communication with ESL training programs regarding needs of foreign graduate students

10. Equality between domestic and foreign TAs

    + Working conditions

    + Commitment

    + Salary

    + Training

11. Favoritism in the classroom

    + of the FTA toward fellow foreign students

    + of the American TA toward the American student

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Institute for Training Foreign TAs, University of Wyoming

Summer 1986

Prepared by Lynne A. McNamara

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* * * * * * *

Background Issues in Testing and Evaluation of Foreign Teaching Assistants

Janet C. Constantinides

University of Wyoming

Pauline Rea, in an article in New Directions in Language Testing (1985), sets eight questions for any test:

1. Why test?
2. Whose responsibility?
3. What is tested?
4. How do we test?
5. What is the function of the tests?
6. What feedback will there be from the test?
7. What are the evaluation criteria?
8. How are the test results to be interpreted?

I won't attempt to cover all of these in this paper [Ed. note: Numbers 1, 2, and 5 were covered in the Institute sessions on administering TA programs.] Table 1 (next page) shows how Rea sees the answers to these questions in a situation where the testing is related to teaching. In this paper I want to focus on numbers 4 and 3, in that order (although that is the reverse order in which they should be considered if we were to construct a test).

HOW DO WE TEST?

Let's begin with the how. Here we have three main considerations: validity, reliability, and cost and ease of administration.

VALIDITY refers to this question: Does it test what it is supposed to? Of course, this involves a question of content, which will be discussed later.

Table 1. Key features of language test for teaching purposes

	Initial	In progress	End
Purpose ↕ Function	• Selection / placement • Motivation • Sensitization • Classificatory • Pedagogic	• Achievement • Progress • Motivation • Sensitization • Pedagogic • Classificatory	• Achievement • Proficiency • Maintaining standards • Classificatory
Whose responsibility? ↕ Strategy ↕ Nature	• Teacher • (students) • Tests • Self-appraisal • Formal	• Joint : teacher and student • Tests • Self-appraisal • Record / diary keeping • Observation • Peer assessments • Informal • Formal	• Teacher • Tests • Self-appraisal • Formal
Knowledge ↕ Content ↕ Evaluation criteria	• Non-communicative • Communicative • Product • Global (+/- direct) • Objectives-based	• Non-communicative • Communicative • Process • Global / atomistic (+/- direct) • Responsive	• Communicative • Product • Global (+ direct) • Objectives-based
How ?	• Integrative • (Decontextualized)	• Integrative • (Decontextualized)	• Integrative
Feedback	• Quantity • Pass / fail • Immediate	• Quality • Immediate	• Quantity • Pass / fail • Delayed

For now, let's consider different types of validity. One kind of validity is"face validity." That is, does the test appear to test what we want it to. For example, if we want to test essay writing ability, on the face of it, it would seem that we would need to ask the students to do something with the written language. This may be done by using either direct or indirect tests. An indirect test could be a multiple choice test that asks the student to identify correct and incorrect spelling, usage, punctuation, etc., that is, an editing test. There are advantages to using such a test: it is easy to administer and to score, and it probably isn't very expensive. But there is one major disadvantage--the results do not correlate highly with writing ability, according to all the available research. A direct test of writing would be a writing sample written by the student in response to some "prompt" or set of directions. The disadvantages of this test are that it can be difficult to administer, time-consuming and difficult to score, and expensive because it is labor intensive. However, it has one major advantage: it shows the student's ability to write.

If we apply this distinction to proficiency and performance testing, we can look at the work of Low and Lee (1985). They studied the correlations between the scores on a battery of screening tests which were given to entering students at Hong Kong University to determine "the extent to which any of the language tests predict the linguistic acceptability of the academic work" (1985:124.) Among the tests was a writing test known as Tutorial Paper Test, which was "intended as a highly direct test of both process and product of writing a tutorial paper" (1985:120). They found the highest correlations between the teacher comments on the assignments done by students near the end of the year and the scores attained on the most direct of the tests used. But none of the tests, direct or indirect, was a good predictor of students'

success at academic tasks as measured by grades or end-of-year exams. Thus, although it had face validity, since it seems to simulate a real writing task, the Tutorial Paper Test was not more valid than the indirect tests in predicting grades, etc.

An example of a direct test for oral proficiency/performance testing would be the video-taped mini-lecture used so commonly now in FTA programs. Although an indirect test may have high statistical validity, the direct test has higher face validity and certainly has what Douglas Stevenson (1985) calls "Pop validity," that is, validity as seen by the non-professional. According to this definition, a test is considered valid because it "looks so good," because it appears to do "something no language test can do: to directly capture, unharmed and intact, real-life proficiency" (1985:111). Although we know that this type of validity is impossible, that notion of validity is often held by those who are making the policy decisions. So it appears that we may need to carefully consider using some sort of direct test.

The next question we have to ask, then, is: Should the test be interactive or non-interactive? Most of the tests currently used for proficiency/ performance testing are non-interactive. The OPE test used at the Center for English as a Second Language at Southern Illinois, for example, is tape recorded. The student is asked to: 1) answer questions, 2) read a passage, 3) listen to a lecture with questions at the end, 4) answer questions about local news, 5) describe a picture story, and 6) describe a picture of a person. The instructions, etc., are on the tape and the students records their answers, which are then listened to and rated at a later time. Another example of an oral proficiency test is the AREL test (no date) developed and used by the Association of Recognised English Language Schools in Great Britain.

Perhaps the test best known, especially in academic circles, is the Test of Spoken English (TSE) and its institutional version, SPEAK.

There are two well-known tests available that are interactive, the FSI (Foreign Service Institute) test and the newly developed ACTFL (American Congress of Teachers of Foreign Language) oral proficiency tests, modelled after the FSI. A most interesting but little known example is the test that Educational Testing Service (ETS) developed for the CIA and later modified for the Peace Corps (Clark 1972:125). The student is given a sheet on which are described, in English, a series of communicative tasks he/she must carry out in the target language with a target-language-speaking tester. "An interesting aspect of this procedure is that the role-playing tester is not aware in advance of the content of the student's message. At the end of the communication situation, the tester relates to a second tester what he understood the content of the message to be" (Clark 1972:125).

Again, we must consider the advantages and disadvantages of each type. Obviously, non-interactive tests are easy to administer; all that may be needed is a portable tape recorder and one tape. But those tests do not measure interactive communicative competence, although Farhady (1983) claims that his "functional" test, which is multiple choice, overcomes part of the problem. Another disadvantage is that these tests are usually very time-consuming to evaluate.[1] Additionally, as discussed above, such tests have low face validity.

On the other hand, interactive tests have the disadvantage of being time-consuming to administer and to evaluate. But they do give an indication of interactive communicative competence, and they may have higher face validity, depending on the task involved in the test and the audience for the results of the test. Even if we could find an indirect test or a non-interactive direct

test that could be proven valid (which hasn't happened so far), we would still have the problem of face validity for those with whom we work, including the prospective FTAs who are being tested, perhaps.

In addition to the problems involving testing already discussed, we often have a mismatch problem. Take, for example, the situation that developed in Malaysia some years ago when the Curriculum Development Centre introduced a new Communication Syllabus for English into the secondary schools, in an effort to integrate the two language-medium systems, English and Malay, as quickly as possible (Davies 1985:6). The Examinations Syndicate, a separate organization, were unwilling to change their school certificate type examination to bring it in line with the new syllabus. "The result was a grotesque mismatch in which the syllabus was in large part unteachable because it properly required, in part, the competence and the intuition of a native speaker teacher and the examination did not in any case test the syllabus" (Davies 1985:6). We are in the same situation. As trainers we are interested in the TA's ability to teach; we want to test something and teach something about presentation skills, etc. But the "examiners," the American students and faculty, want to use another "exam," pronunciation. So, even after TAs leave our programs and we are content that they are proficient, they may fail the "exam" if they don't sound like near-natives. (I would also suggest that some of us as teachers may not have the "competence and intuition" of a "native speaker" of undergraduate math or science classes; I have dealt with that issue elsewhere.)[2]

The next consideration is that of RELIABILITY. In somewhat oversimplified terms, a reliable test will give the same results when given to the same subjects under the same conditions. It takes a lot of research to establish reliability; I don't think we are ready to deal with that issue yet. But John L.D. Clark (1979) provides these summaries:

> Neither direct nor semi-direct tests of speaking ability can be considered superior to the other and each has advantages and drawbacks which must be considered in light of the purpose of the test. As measures of general proficiency, direct tests of speaking ability, such as the FSI interview, have a high degree of face/content validity, have high scoring reliability, are expensive to administer and are not particularly efficient in diagnosing specific weaknesses. Semi-direct speaking tests, such as recording a story told about a stimulus picture, have varying degrees of scoring reliability ranging from low to nearly perfect, are more cost-effective when group administered, are good diagnostic measures and may be proposed as substitutes for direct tests in measuring general ability where direct tests are not operationally possible.

The problem in this is that, when we test foreign TAs, we are not testing general ability--at least we shouldn't be. And that is the problem with using the TSE as the only criterion for a prospective FTA; it tests general ability.

Consider this distinction (Cummins 1983:119):

BICS	**CALP**
Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills	Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency

It seems to me that we are dealing with a special sub-set of CALP and we need to look closely at that. (And we need to find a suitable acronym--SCALP won't do!)

WHAT IS TESTED?

That brings us to our second major question: What is tested? Or, better yet, what should be tested? The obvious answer is "communicative competence." Canale (1983) proposed the following model for communicative competence:

> 1. Grammatical competence: mastery of the language code (e.g., lexical items and rules of word formation, sentence formation, literal meaning, pronunciation, and spelling).
> 2. Sociolinguistic competence: mastery of appropriate use and understanding of language in different sociolinguistic contexts, with emphasis on appropriateness of meanings and forms.
> 3. Discourse competence: mastery of how to combine and interpret meanings and forms to achieve unified text in different modes (e.g., casual conversation, argumentative essay, or recipe) by using (a) cohesion devices to relate forms (e.g., use of pronouns, synonyms, transition words, and parallel structures) and (b) coherence rules to organize meanings (e.g., to achieve relevance, development, consistency, and proportion of ideas).
> 4. Strategic competence: mastery of verbal and nonverbal strategies both (a) to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to insufficient competence or to performance limitations and (b) to enhance the rhetorical effect of utterances.

I would submit that we need to add the following three items to that description when we define what we mean by communicative competence for foreign TAs.

> 5. Special sociolinguistic competence: mastery of the appropriate use and understanding of language within post-secondary education institutions and within discipline-specific "sub-cultures."
> 6. Subject matter competence
> 7. Pedagogical competence

The next question, then, is what kind of test will test for these areas. I would suggest that the videotaped mini-lecture, if done correctly, could do this.

The research of Alderson and Urquart (1983) supports the idea that any test of oral proficiency, if it is to be valid, must be both task and content familiar. That is, if we want to test the proficiency of the FTA <u>as a teacher</u> then we need to test those last three competencies. That means that the FTA should be tested on familiar content (his major field of study). There are, of course, pedagogical implications for us as trainers. As Jim Cummins' research shows (1983),

> The more context-reduced a particular task (i.e., the fewer nonlinguistic clues to meaning) the longer it will take L_2 learners to achieve age-appropriate performance.

In his study, immigrant children developed face to face communicative skills in L_2 in two years, but took five to seven years to develop grade-level skills. [These differences in learning rates may also be related to the difference between BICS and CALP, in my opinion.]

Another consideration is which of the competencies listed above should have what degree of emphasis? I don't think we are ready to answer that question yet.

In fact, there have been some attempts to construct the type of test we may need:

1. Donald M. Morrison and Nancy Lee (1985) simulated an academic tutorial for incoming freshmen in Hong Kong University. They identified the language tasks that students would have to perform in order to be successful in a tutorial setting and then used the results of the test for prediction of success. They used an interesting assessment scale (see figure 1). But they purposely ruled out any consideration of pronunciation.

	ASSESSMENT					CERTAINTY				
SCALE	Unsatisfactory		Satisfactory		very good	low		medium		high
ENGLISH PROFICIENCY	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
ACADEMIC POTENTIAL	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

Figure 1. Marking scheme

2. Anne Biersteker (1986) used the ACTFL test with some additions. She subdivided the "cultural area" which was on the CIA test (which also included pronunciation, fluency/integrative, sociolinguistc/culture, grammar, and vocabulary tasks).

Biersteker's scheme includes:

Aural/Oral

Social/Cultural

Emotive/Pragmatic

Lexical/Traditional

Reading/Writing

She defines these catagories in the following manner:

Oral/Aural - "fluency and control in operating the phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics of the language."

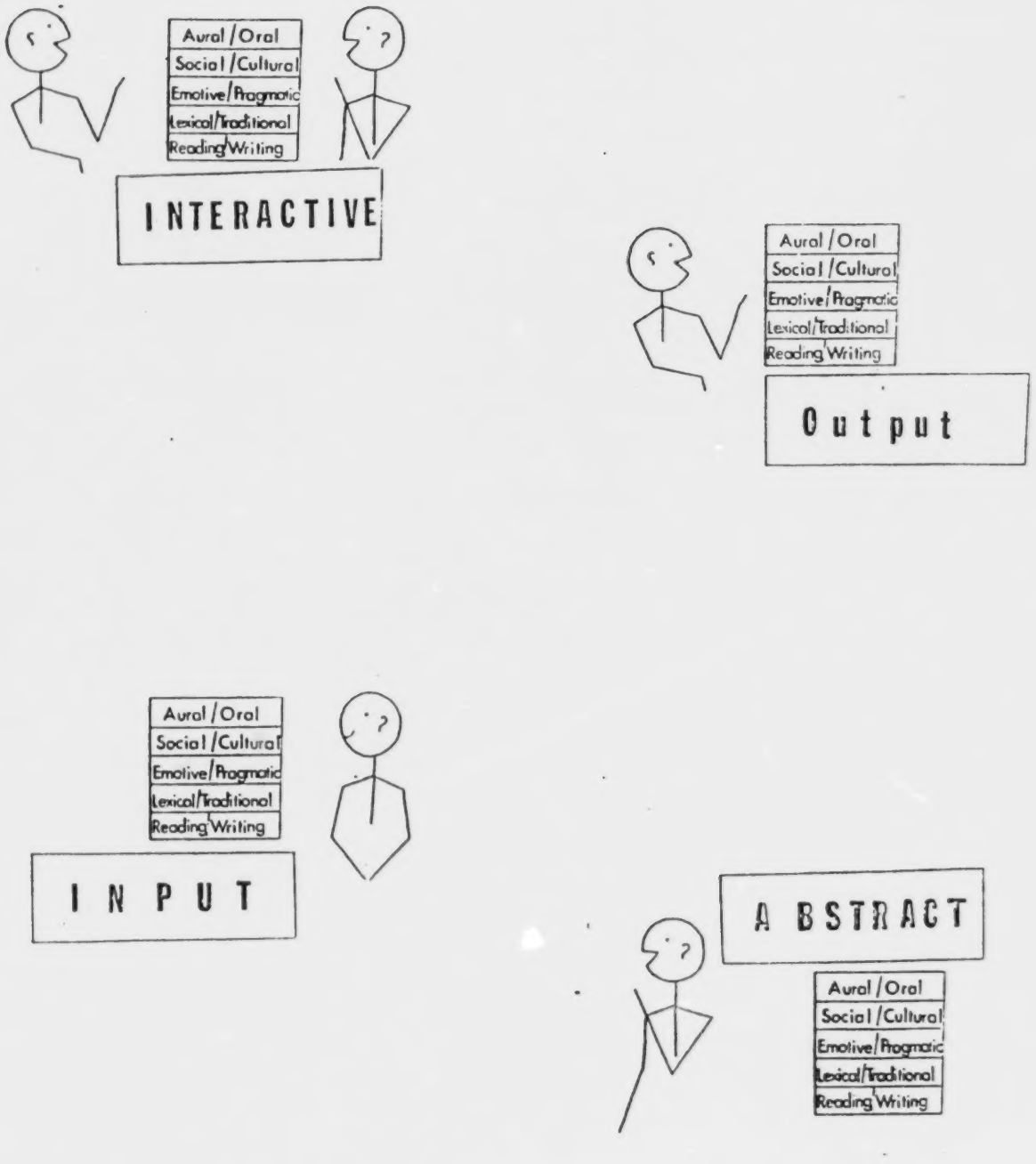
Socio-Cultural - the prompts consider communicative "scenes," that is, a "culture-specific unit of interaction involving patterned, often formalized, activity and associated verbal behavior (i.e., introductions, job interview, license applications, "lunching").

Emotive/Pragmatic - the "control of the force of communication." For example, the speaker must recognize and respond to anger, irony, pleading; be able to criticize, offer praise, and indicate varying degrees of sincerity and commitment; show deference and establish status. (This also includes use of silence.)

Lexical-Traditional - a range of cultural vocabulary, use of idiom and access to the literary and historical allusions of the target language (i.e. acronyms in business, stories associated with leaders in the field, legends of business success and failure, symbols and status in the field).

Biersteker's scheme also includes an interactive component, as shown in figure 2 (next page). Biersteker used questions for the raters to get rankings from 0 to 3 in sixty catagories. From that, she produced a profile, which defines areas of training needs and predicts success (by being matched carefully to a

Figure 2. Scheme with interactive component



person's assignment). Based on the results of the tests, she then uses task-oriented training (i.e., the supervisor who lacks high level emotive-pragmaticskill would benefit from small group activities with target language speakers focused on ways of praising, thanking, criticizing, and congratulating).

CONCLUSION

In fact, where are we? In my view, we have an enormous task, which is the result of enforced testing or the loud public outcry about FTAs which has been all too apparent in the past few years. We have no adequate test available, although we have been told to test. Additionally, we need a range of tests, to use for proficiency testing, diagnosis, achievement testing, and (in many situations) a test to be used as a certification instrument.

I would suggest that we have problems in the following areas:

1. What to test for
2. How to test for it
3. Administration of test
4. Evaluation of test
5. Necessity of face validity
6. Mismatch of syllabus and exam

What can we do about it? As long ago as 1951, Ryan and Frederiksen (1979:52) suggested a useful procedure for preparing a performance test which is valid, reliable, and efficient. They list seven necessary steps:

1. Make a job analysis.
2. Select tasks to represent the job.
3. Develop a rating form.
4. Survey the practical limitations of the test.
5. Develop a tentative operating plan.

6. Try out the test and revise it.

7. Prepare directions for administration and use the test.

Here, then, is our agenda--what we need to do in order to be able to test effectively. We need to begin with number 1; we know very little about the "job," the teaching tasks that FTAs are asked to do. Someone needs to consider a new test or test format. Here are our assignments for the rest of the Institute.

[The working group on Pedagogy looked at the type of teaching tasks involved and how to match those to communication specific skills; the working group on Testing worked on numbers 2 through 5. The results are reported in section 2 of this volume.]

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Notes

1. There is some work being done that may help overcome this time problem. Thomas Pendergast, of Osaka University of Foreign Studies, reports (1985) that with an OLAF computer, using the N-73 program it is possible to do an evaluation of only a two to three minute segment of oral language in order to obtain a reliable evaluation.

2. See, for example, Constantinides, J. and P. Byrd, The design of FTA training programs: Searching for appropriate teaching styles, forthcoming

SECTION 2 - WORKING PAPERS

After the background sessions, the participants in the Institute chose various working groups to be a part of for the remainder of the Institute. Each working group had a resource person assigned to it, but each group decided how it would organize itself. The cross-cultural communication group met as a group throughout the working period. The testing group met at lunch daily to discuss their individual plans for the afternoon and then met again late in the afternoon to share what they had done and to "do battle" over various theoretical stances or applications of them. The pedagogy group identified a number of tasks it wanted to undertake and assigned various of them to different members. The working groups then reported to the full group on the last two days of the Institute.

What follows in this section are the papers which resulted from the working groups. In some cases, they represent fairly well articulated positions; in others, they are the beginnings of some interesting ideas.

In each case, the person who was primarily responsible for putting the paper together in its written form is identifed. That person's address and phone are available in the List of Participants at the end of this volume, should you want to contact anyone for further information. But each paper is, in fact, the result of the work of the entire working group and, to some extent, the entire dozen participants. The ongoing conversations and unceasing deliberations that took place during the Institute shaped each of these papers--and to some extent shaped the participants as well.

GAINING AND MAINTAINING CAMPUS-WIDE SUPPORT FOR AN INTERNATIONAL TEACHING ASSISTANT TRAINING PROGRAM

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July 1986

ABSTRACT: The training of international teaching assistants has been recognized as an important factor in quality undergraduate instruction. Since successful training programs have the support of key university constituencies, the authors suggest that these groups and their relevant values must be identified to develop that support. The identification of these groups and values becomes part of a dynamic model wherein cooptation is presented as a strategy of choice. In support of this strategy a tactical framework is presented to gain university-wide support. The purpose of this paper is to present a process and specific behaviors which a would-be program developer can employ to market such a program across campus.

INTRODUCTION

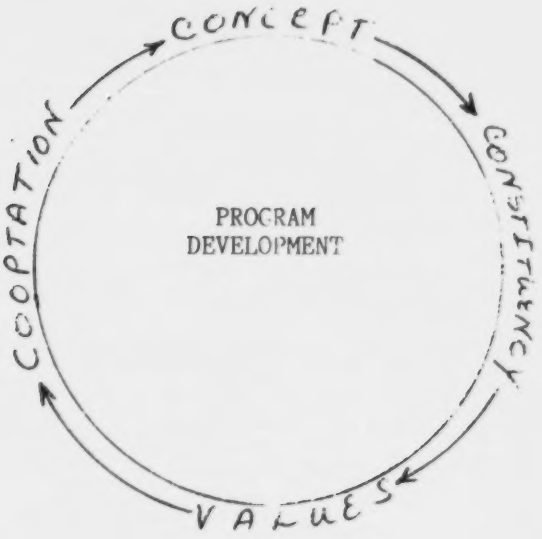
In increasing numbers, undergraduates on U.S. college campuses are finding that their instructors, especially in introductory courses, are non-native speakers of English. These international teaching assistants are often the targets of emotionally-laden complaints from students and parents due to communication barriers posed by linguistic, pedagogical and cultural factors. (Bailey 1982, Fisher 1985)

Establishing a training program for international teaching assistants can help address these issues. Successful programs have been implemented at the University of Wyoming, Texas Tech University, University of Maryland, and the University of Washington. All have a common trait: they have established and maintain a strong, broad-based support. A dynamic model for change may act as a useful tool.

The authors are proposing a general value-based model by which would-be program developers can gain and maintain university-wide acceptance of their proposal or their program in place. The model begins with a clear statement of the concept: a description of the program and its purpose. The stages of the model include the identification of constituencies in the

university community which will be affected by a training program, the value of the program to each constituency and cooptation of the consitutency to the cause. The paper offers an inventory of possible constituencies and values as well as tactics toward cooptation. The dynamic quality of the model is important because it emphasizes the continual development of the program. The following diagram demonstrates the process.

MODEL



CONSTITUENCIES

Defining the key groups on campus which are involved in necessary support of an International Teaching Assistant (ITA) program is the first important action. These groups and individuals may differ slightly from campus to campus. The constituents identified below represent an overview; the list is not meant to be inclusive. There may be some variation in organizational structure depending on the size of an institution. The groups affected by a training program for ITAs are as follows:

CONSTITUENT GROUPS

1. Undergraduate students and student groups
2. Graduate students
3. Graduate student association/government
4. Faculty
5. ESL Program
6. Administrators and Regents
7. Campus and Community Media
8. Alumni Association
9. Foundation
10. Legislators

VALUES

After target constituencies have been initially identified, the program developer must consider how an ITA program might benefit the group or individuals within that group. Such a benefit is defined as the "value" to the particular constituency. These values must coincide with the overall ideology and purpose of the constituency and are presented in the Addendum as suggestions which might be modified according to the specific situation on individual campuses. Analyzing these values serves a duofold purpose: (1) because of the benefits that an ITA training program has to a constituency individually or as a group, they will assist in establishing and maintaining such a program; and, thus, (2) the constituency is confirmed. When a program is seen as relevant to a specific need, there is support. The ten constituent groups as presented above and their suggested values are outlined in the Addendum and commented upon below.

The STUDENT constituency is fundamental. If the students are not happy in the classroom, they become the dissatisfied consumer. Parents, other students (present and potential), and the legislature will eventually know about the problem. Student groups, such as the Greeks, the Residence Hall, Clubs and student government, can be of assistance in defining means of working with students and in disseminating positive information about the ITA training program.

The GRADUATE STUDENT group has a vested interest in an ITA training program. The majority of graduate students seek Teaching Assistantships and receive them. It is their constituency which is directly affected by the training. Therefore, their support is crucial in developing the program.

The GRADUATE STUDENT GOVERNMENT body can also be employed to assist in supporting an ITA program. It is important to this

assist in supporting an ITA program. It is important to this group to help their constituents. An ITA program offers that opportunity.

The importance of an ITA training program as seen by the FACULTY is associated with improved undergraduate education. The better their department looks, the better each faculty member looks and vice-versa.

The ESL PROGRAM will be of great assistance in providing expert advice and personnel for the training program. Their knowledge of cross-cultural difficulties and English language learning processes are essential to the success of an ITA program.

The ADMINISTRATION AND REGENTS can be approached from a variety of values based on economics, politics, and quality of instruction. As is seen in the Addendum by the long list of needs that can be satisfied by offering an ITA training program, the administration has a lot to gain. The Regents can be included in this group because their values seem to be the same at an institutional level.

The CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY MEDIA are a component of the communication chain that is sometimes forgotten when we are talking about support. Their interest is seen from the purpose of their existence, that is, communicating matters concerning the campus and the community.

The ALUMNI ASSOCIATION is also often forgotten in a schema of involvement. Yet, a training program for ITAs does satisfy some of their needs with regard to quality of instruction at their alma mater. Therefore, incorporating this constituency into the development phase of an ITA program can assist in getting overall support.

The FOUNDATION is another group whose support is beneficial and sometimes not included because of oversight. Sources of funding can be a critical matter and the Foundation can help if they have given their support to the project.

The final group which the authors have identified is LEGISLATORS. This constituency is the most powerful of all the groups mentioned and would be at the top of an organizational chart. Their support would open doors that otherwise might not be there. A legislative mandate would assure commitment to an ITA training program. The ideal is that all the other constituencies are in agreement with the concept so that they will more easily support a mandate if that would occur.

The set of values listed in the Addendum for each constituency is not meant to be limiting or necessarily absolute. Situations change from campus to campus. The purpose here is to identify some values in general. Each program developer should expand and eliminate constituencies and their values as it is seen relative to their particular campus. Our attempt here is duofold: (1) to present the concept of significant groups who will assist in establishing and maintaining a training program for ITAs and (2) to indicate that they will offer that support because of the value that such a program has to them individually or as a group. The result of this effort is a wider support base.

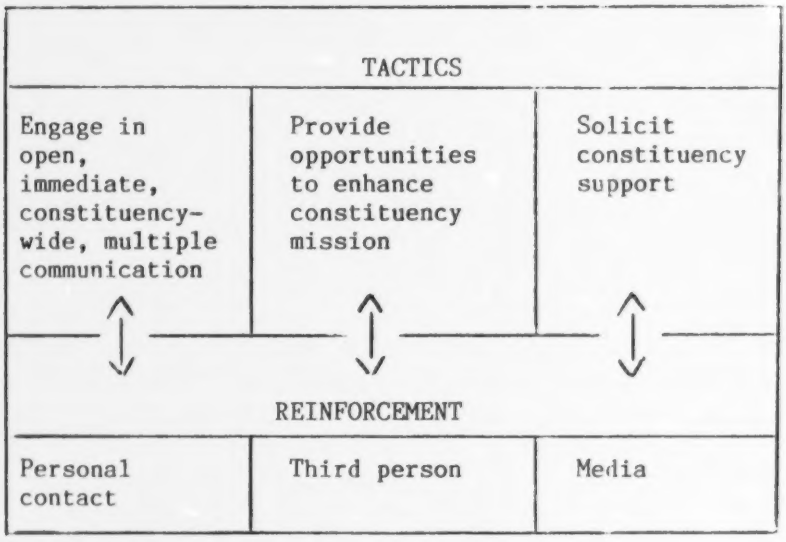
COOPTATION

Cooptation is a procedure, a method, by which cooperation is elicited. Cooptation is achieved by developing a network and contacts, attaining an alignment of purpose among different groups, and addressing the values of each group as they apply to the task at hand which, in this case, is the establishment and support of a successful training program for International Teaching Assistants. Cooptation results in institutional involvement rather than isolation of individual groups.

Cooptation is a dynamic concept of institutional involvement which continues to be reflective of the institution's mission. That mission is the sum-total of all the missions of the university's individual constituencies. Because cooptation brings about involvement, the concept can be enhanced as each constituency is a part of the dynamic. When a group takes ownership because they are a part, they want to make it better and, therefore, look at positive change and growth. Thus, cooptation defies entropy.

The strategy for implementing cooptation is graphically shown below. It requires three important tactics: (1) engaging in open, immediate constituency-wide multiple communication; (2) providing opportunities to enhance the mission of the constituency; and (3) soliciting support from the constituency. All of these tactics must be reinforced through making personal contacts, communicating through a third party, and using the media. The schema below summarizes the strategy. Examples follow.

STRATEGY:



Open, immediate communication consists of informing various constituencies of discussions and conclusions with other constituencies. This can be accomplished in a number of ways. For example, if the undergraduate student government at your university were to pass a resolution endorsing the concept of ITA training, then it becomes important to have that action publicized and known throughout the university community. On a different level, if your discussion with a key administrative figure results in an endorsement of your program concept, then it is necessary to make that endorsement known to others. Personal contact with others via phone or in social settings, acquisition of a written letter of endorsement, and informing the media are all ways of reinforcing such endorsement. Mentioning to a third person that you have received the support from a particular individual or group spreads information about the positive results and the third party can then reinforce the endorser of the action.

Opportunities which enhance a constituency's mission are always sought by that constituency. Each constituency within a university represents a specific interest. Of primary concern is the notion of preservation. Preservation is accomplished as a result of involvement in activities deemed relevant by the rest of the university community. For example, when that office responsible for residence life engages in programming designed to broaden undergraduate multi-cultural perspectives, then the residence hall community addresses one of its missions. In this way it preserves its own existence by demonstrating the

importance the residence hall has in the education of the student population. Again, reinforcement is essential to produce cooptation. The campus media (newspaper, radio) could inform the campus community of the program being offered by the residence hall.

The final tactic in the strategy is to solicit the support of the constituency. This can be accomplished through direct request of endorsement. Verbal and written statements can be made public by the constituency solicited. These can be reinforced through publishing such statements. The person trying to gain support can offer to assist in any way necessary to get this support known: supplying a draft statement summarizing the support, writing a press release to be reviewed by the endorsing party, or possibly arranging for an interview by the press.

CONCLUSION

After assessing the relevant constituencies on a university campus and ascertaining their values, a program developer is ready to initiate the strategy of cooptation in order to gain acceptance of the concept of a training program for International Teaching Assistants. This model can also be used for programs that are already in place that need to broaden their base of support. A successful interfacing of campus constituencies will result in overall support.

ADDENDUM

CONSTITUENCIES AND THEIR VALUES

1. Undergraduate students and student groups

   ITA training improves academic success because of consequent quality instruction.

   A. Quality instruction improves content communication.
   B. Quality instruction increases student motivate and stimulation.

2. Graduate students (TAs)

   A. ITA training offers opportunity for personal development.

      (1) TAs gain greater control, self-esteem, and confidence.
      (2) Training reduces frustration, anxiety, and guilt about classroom performance.
      (3) Department commitment and training with colleagues builds feeling in TAs of belonging and acceptance.

   B. ITA training offers professional development.

      (1) Training enhances competence in teaching.
      (2) Better teaching results in better evaluations which enlarges employment opportunities, present and future.
      (3) Training program establishes professional contact with faculty.

3. Graduate student government

   A. Training program for graduate-level students gives credibility to their function because their support is an opportunity to participate in development of their constituency.

B. Support for an ITA program provides added communication with administration which is an opportunity to represent their constituency on a significant issue.

4. Faculty

A. Graduate Faculty

(1) More qualified teachers would be available to teach courses.
(2) Departments would receive higher course evaluations as a result of better training of TAs.

B. Faculty Senate would have an opportunity to interface with students and administration in the development of a positive program.

5. ESL Program

A. ITA training program would provide work for ESL teachers within the training program.

B. ESL program involvement in the training program would provide income for the ESL program.

C. Such involvement gives the ESL program influence within the university system.

D. A training program provides research opportunities for ESL faculty.

6. Administration and Regents

A. An ITA training program improves ability of institution to meet instructional mission.

(1) Quality teaching in undergraduate courses is part of institution's mission.
(2) Better teaching leads to increased retention.
(3) Higher retention leads to higher FTE.
(4) Higher FTE means better funding.

B. Such a training program improves institution's position in the marketplace.

(1) Support for the program demonstrates institutional concern with quality of undergraduate education.
(2) Offering the training satisfies a perceived public need.

C. Establishment of an ITA program demonstrates cost effectiveness by resolving a problem at an early stage.

D. The training meets specific group needs.

(1) Deans' needs are met.
(a) Training provides solution to the ITA problem.
(b) Training satisfies Department Chairs.

(2) Department Chairs' needs are met.
(a) ITA training supplements own training program.
(b) Training satisfies student complaints.

7. Campus and Community Media

A. ITA training provides a story on an issue of relevance.

B. Training provides a solution to the issue.

C. Reporting on this issue and its solutions meets their public service requirements.

8. Alumni Association

A. ITA training guarantees continued interest of the institution in quality.

B. The Association's commitment to such a program offers them an opportunity to participate in academic excellence.

C. Such participation provides the Association with a quality image.

9. Foundation

   A. Commitment from the Foundation offers an opportunity to participate in academic excellence.

   B. A successful training program provides good PR for the institution which the Foundation can use in their promotional activities.

10. Legislators

   A. An ITA training program satisfies taxpayer by offering a solution to complaints.

   B. The training improves educational quality.

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ORAL INTERVIEW FOR INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

Prepared by Ralph Pat Barrett
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In the coming years, it appears certain that many international graduate students will have an opportunity to assume teaching roles in U.S. colleges and universities. Whether they will be judged suitable to the task may depend partly on the quality of their academic credentials, partly on their previous teaching experience, and partly on their ability to use the English language appropriately for communication.

At present, most U.S. institutions offering graduate education appear to be using the SPEAK test (note 1) for the evaluation of the international graduate student's English speaking proficiency. In the absence of anything else, it is a good choice, as it offers the obvious advantages of (1) professionally prepared materials, (2) easy availability, (3) wide-spread use which permits the comparison of results among its users, (4) ease of administration, (5) and well-prepared materials for training the novice test rater.

However, the SPEAK test has certain weaknesses, some of which are only revealed by careful observation of actual administrations of the test. First of all, because the test requires the students to respond to taped cues within strict time limits, they find the SPEAK to be extremely stressful. Also, because some of the questions presented to the student are rather long and involved, the students' listening comprehension is being tested along with their oral production. Another problem is that the various forms of the SPEAK do not appear to be completely parallel in terms of difficulty. On some forms, the picture cues are not as clear as they could be, resulting in confusion even on the part of native English speakers who have examined them. On one form of the test, the students are asked to talk about an object which few of them had ever seen and most were even unable to name.

The most serious weakness of the SPEAK test, however, seems to lie in its artificiality. The students are not actually given a chance to **communicate.** Being required to think quickly about often puzzling or irrelevant questions and to answer into a tape recorder on demand--this is not communication!

For these reasons, it was concluded that a less stressful assessment procedure was needed, one which would be conducted like an oral interview and which would fulfill the basic requirement of furnishing a valid evaluation of the international graduate assistant's (IGA's) ability to communicate. To that end, the oral interview procedure described below was designed to provide an assessment of the IGA's communicative competence (note 3).

For the purposes of this testing procedure, **communicative competence** (note 2) includes the following components:

1. Linguistic competence, involving appropriate language usage of pronunciation, grammar, intonation, vocabulary, and fluency.

2. Sociocultural competence, involving the appropriateness of one's communicative behavior with respect to the social and cultural context in which the communication takes place; that is, the appropriateness of **what** is said and **how** it is said in a specific social and cultural setting.

3. Discourse competence, involving the use of appropriate means of developing an extended discourse, usually a series of continuous sentences,

using a suitable rhetorical device and appropriate features of text coherence and cohesion. If all of the sentences in a text contribute to a single, global concept, then the discourse is **coherent** (a coherent whole). When the sentences show connecting features (such as pronouns, conjunctions, parallel structuring, comparisons, synonyms, and ellipses) that link them together, we say that the discourse is **cohesive** as well.

4. Strategic competence, involving the appropriate use of communicative strategies to enhance communication or to compensate for imperfect communication. For example, strategies that can often improve communication include restatement, repetition, and paraphrase; other strategies, such as hesitation, avoidance, guessing at meaning, and circumlocution, can often help to sustain communication when one speaker is unsure of the communicative rules or becomes inattentive, distracted, or fatigued during a conversation.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ORAL INTERVIEW PROCEDURE

The oral interview has seven parts, with each part scored separately for one or more of the four components of communicative competence described above. The interviewer should feel free to omit any part of the procedure that for some reason does not serve a useful function in testing the IGA's communicative competence. Also, the parts may be rearranged in any way that the interviewer considers more effective in assessing the student's communicative abilities.

The scoring of the oral interview procedure uses a five point scale. However, those wishing to use a four point scale (such as that used to rate the SPEAK test) may ignore the 4 and use only the numbers 0 to 3. Ratings for the four components of communicative competence (linguistic competence, sociocultural competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence) are made in comparison with a native speaker standard of performance, as described below:

"0" Rating: Completely inadequate or inappropriate communicative competence which makes normal communication impossible.

"1" Rating: Largely inadequate or inappropriate communicative competence which frequently prevents meaningful communication.

"2" Rating: Many examples of inadequate or inappropriate communicative competence which occasionally hinder full communicative effectiveness.

"3" Rating: Almost up to native speaker communicative performance; some evidence of inadequate or inappropriate communicative competence which does not interfere with communicative effectiveness.

"4" Rating: Indistinguishable from native speaker communicative performance; may have a slight foreign dialect (foreign accent) which does not in any way hinder full communicative effectiveness.

It is recommended that the interviewer not attempt to score the interview while it is taking place. To facilitate accurate scoring after the completion

of the interview, an audio or video recording should be made of the entire oral interview. For greater reliability, two raters should score the interview tape independently, the final score being an average of the two raters' scores. In the case of a wide discrepancy in the two scores, a third rater should score the interview and the two closest scores averaged.

PART ONE: GETTING ACQUAINTED

* Purpose: To put the student at ease and to establish a working rapport with him/her; also, to obtain evidence of sociocultural and strategic competence.

* Materials Needed: Personal data on the IGA, including name, home country, native language, field of study, educational background, type of graduate assistantship, etc.

* Procedure: The interviewer greets the student, introduces him/herself, and explains the purpose of the interview and how the scores will be used. Then, a few minutes are given to the task of establishing rapport with the student, usually done by finding common ground which might serve as the focus for further discussion.

* Suggested Techniques: In order to check for sociocultural knowledge, the interviewer might say:

"Hello. I'm going to give you the oral interview today. My name is ... . And you are ... ." The IGA is expected to fill in the pause with his/her name. If this strategy fails, the interviewer should ask, "What is your name?"

*Scoring: Sociocultural, Strategic

PART TWO: PRONUNCIATION OF TECHNICAL TERMS

* Purpose: To obtain evidence of the IGA's linguistic competence as demonstrated in the ability to pronounce specific terms used in his/her field of study.

* Materials Needed: A short list of technical terms related to the IGA's field of study. Here is a list suitable for chemistry majors:

Chemistry

carbohydrate	biochemistry
hydrolysis	nitrogen oxide
oxidation	copper sulfide
phosphorus	valence bond
ammonia	carbon monoxide
thermodynamics	gas-phase reaction
formula	melting point
temperature	vapor pressure

* Procedure: The interviewer explains the task to the IGA. The IGA then is given the list of terms to read silently for about twenty seconds. Then the student is asked to read the list aloud.

* Scoring: Linguistic

PART THREE: READING A PASSAGE ALOUD

* Purpose: To obtain evidence of the IGA's linguistic competence, as revealed in the use of the oral reading skill.

* Materials Needed: A set of four to eight paragraphs (each of about 1/4 printed page in length) related to the IGA's field of study (such as chemistry, economics, business, physics, mathematics, etc.) Below is an example suitable for mathematics majors:

Mathematics

Every child begins his study of mathematics with an introduction to the whole numbers: 1, 2, 3, and so on . So it was with mankind as a group. Slowly, and in stages, men manipulated digits and finally came up against unexpected problems that taught them about numbers other than digits. For instance, there are two two's in four, three two's in six, etc. In other words, four divided by two is "2" and six divided by two is "3". But how many two's are there in five? More than two, yes, but certainly less than three. In this way, men were forced to think of numbers that lie between digits. The quantity 5/2 (five divided by two) can only be two and a half; that is, one unit plus one unit plus half a unit. Half a unit can be expressed logically as 1/2 (one divided by two). We call numbers such as these fractions, after the Latin word "fractus" meaning "broken".

* Procedure: The task is explained to the IGA, who is then asked to choose one of the paragraphs that he/she feels comfortable with and to read it silently. (A one-minute time limit is recommended for the silent reading.) Then the student is asked to read the paragraph aloud, clearly and with expression. There should be no time limit for the oral reading.

* Scoring: Linguistic

* Note: If the student's linguistic performance on Parts One, Two and Three is mostly or completely unintelligible, then the interviewer might consider ending the oral interview at this point and recommending intensive training in pronunication/speaking for the student.

PART FOUR: ROLE PLAY (EXPLAINING THE CONTENT OF THE PARAGRAPH)

* Purpose: To obtain evidence of the IGA's use of discourse features in his/her "classroom" style of explanation; also, to obtain evidence of linguistic, sociocultural and strategic competence.

* Materials Needed: A chalkboard with chalk (or a large pad of paper and a pen/pencil) for the student to use for illustrating his/her explanation.

* Procedure: The interviewer explains to the student that he/she should assume the role of a graduate assistant teaching in the classroom. The student should be told that the pad and pencil (or chalkboard) are there for his/her use, just as he/she would use the chalkboard in a typical classroom. The interviewer plays the role of an undergraduate American student who wants clarification of certain points contained in the paragraph previously read by the student. The student should not refer to the paragraph during this portion of the test but should try to explain the subject matter from memory.

* Suggested Techniques: The interviewer in the role of an undergraduate student should wait until the IGA has had a chance to almost finish his/her "lecture" before asking any questions. If possible, the interviewer's questions should be phrased in various ways. Here are some suggestions:

(Raise hand and interrupt) "I don't understand. My high school teacher told us that ... (contradictory information)."

"You're saying that ... is the way it works?" (Seeking clarification)

"I'm not sure what you mean when you say ... " (Expressing real lack of understanding)

"It seems to make sense when you say it, but I'm not sure I understand it yet. Would you go over that part about ... " (Seeking clarification)

* Scoring: Linguistic, Discourse, Sociocultural, Strategic

PART FIVE: PEDAGOGICAL QUESTIONS

* Purpose: To obtain evidence of the IGA's knowledge of sociocultural and strategic competence.

* Materials Needed: A set of prepared questions, several of which are selected by the interviewer for use with any given student.

* Procedure: The interviewer explains the question and answer procedure to the IGA. The interviewer asks the student about various pedagogical practices which are relevant to teaching in an American classroom. Only two or three topics need be covered, unless the interviewer has not elicited the desired amount of information from the IGA.

* Suggested Techniques: The interviewer might ask a series of questions relating to a single topic:

"Your name is difficult for most Americans to pronounce, isn't it? What name would you like your students to use when they talk to you?"

"What would a professor in your country do if a student came into the classroom fifteen minutes late?"

"If you were teaching a class here at this university and a student came in fifteen minutes late, what do you think you would do?"

* Scoring: Linguistic, Sociocultural, Strategic

PART SIX: ROLE PLAY (OFFICE HOUR SITUATION)

* Purpose: To obtain evidence of the student's sociocultural and strategic competence.

* Materials Needed: A list of situations which can be used for eliciting one-on-one ("office hour") behavior from the IGA.

* Procedure: The interviewer explains the role play task to the IGA. The student is asked to assume the role of a teaching assistant in his/her office during office hours. The interviewer plays the role of an undergraduate American student who comes in with some kind of problem. The problem is discussed, with the interviewer asking various types of questions using idiomatic expressions typical of undergraduates and, at times, rapid speech. The interviewer should not deliberately harrass the IGA, but should play the role of an aggressive, self-confident undergraduate with a study-related problem.

* Suggested Techniques: Some problems that might be used are the following:

The undergraduate student wants to hand in an assignment late; ...wishes to borrow the TA's lecture notes to study; ...wants a chance to make up an hour exam because he/she overslept and missed the exam; ...asks the TA to let him/her take an early final exam in order to leave for a trip with friends; etc.

* Scoring: Sociocultural, Strategic

PART SEVEN: REVIEW OF THE PEDAGOGICAL ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

* Purpose: To gather evidence of the IGA's question-asking skill, a component of linguistic, sociocultural, and strategic competence.

* Materials Needed: The IGA's Pedagogical Assessment Questionnaire (see Appendix), which should have been completed by the student prior to the beginning of the interview.

* Procedure: The interviewer discusses the purpose of the questionnaire briefly and explains the procedure. The interviewer then tries to elicit questions from the IGA regarding some of the items on the questionnaire.

* Suggested Techniques: The interviewer should try to get the IGA interested in one or more of the questionnaire items so that the student will be

motivated to ask questions. For example, the interviewer might say "Did you find any of these items difficult to answer?" or "Were there any that seemed very strange or unusual to you?" Then the interviewer can stimulate question-asking behavior by asking "Do you have any questions about them?" In response to questions, he/she could encourage further questions by giving the IGA useful information regarding the subculture of the American classroom, American student/teacher behavior, etc.

* Scoring: Linguistic, Sociocultural, Strategic

NOTES

1. The SPEAK (Spoken English Assessment Kit) is the commercial form of the TSE (Test of Spoken English) and is available from ETS (Educational Testing Service).

2. This concept of communicative competence was freely adapted from the more formal version described by Sandra J. Savignon in her excellent text, Communicative Competence: Theory and Classroom Practice, pp. 35-41 (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley, 1983).

3. The author wishes to thank his fellow participants in the Wyoming Institute on Training Foreign TA's for their valuable comments and suggestions regarding the design of this oral interview procedure. Special thanks go to Patricia Byrd, Lynne McNamara, Phil Johncock, and of course, Janet Constantinides.

CROSS-CULTURAL/PEDAGOGICAL ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE FOR INTERNATIONAL TEACHING ASSISTANTS

By Ralph Pat Barrett and Lynne McNamara

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12. It is acceptable for an instructor to publicly admit that he/she does not know the answer to a student's question. (A) (D)

13. An instructor may point a finger at a student in order to indicate whose turn it is to answer a question. (A) (D)

14. It is acceptable for an instructor to restate a student's question for purposes of clarification. (A) (D)

15. It is acceptable for an instructor to lean on the edge of a desk while lecturing. (A) (D)

16. Students should not leave a class early without the instructor's permission. (A) (D)

17. An instructor should inform the students in advance that they will have an examination. (A) (D)

18. If a student has not been handing in his/her homework on time, the instructor should question the student in private. (A) (D)

SCORING SHEET FOR ORAL INTERVIEW FOR INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

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SCORING FOR PART ONE (GETTING ACQUAINTED)

Sociocultural Competence	0	1	2	3	4
Strategic Competence	0	1	2	3	4

SCORING FOR PART TWO (PRONUNCIATION OF TECHNICAL TERMS)

Linguistic Competence	0	1	2	3	4

SCORING FOR PART THREE (READING ALOUD)

Linguistic Competence	0	1	2	3	4

SCORING FOR PART FOUR (TEACHER-STUDENT ROLE PLAY)

Linguistic Competence	0	1	2	3	4
Discourse Competence	0	1	2	3	4
Sociocultural Competence	0	1	2	3	4
Strategic Competence	0	1	2	3	4

SCORING FOR PART FIVE (PEDAGOGICAL QUESTIONS)

Linguistic Competence	0	1	2	3	4
Sociocultural Competence	0	1	2	3	4
Strategic Competence	0	1	2	3	4

SCORING FOR PART SIX (OFFICE HOUR ROLE PLAY)

Sociocultural Competence	0	1	2	3	4
Strategic Competence	0	1	2	3	4

SCORING FOR PART SEVEN (REVIEW OF PEDAGOGICAL ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE)

Linguistic Competence	0	1	2	3	4
Sociocultural Competence	0	1	2	3	4
Strategic Competence	0	1	2	3	4

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SCORE SUMMARY FOR THE ORAL INTERVIEW FOR INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

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SCORE FOR:	LING	DISC	SOCIO	STRAT
PART ONE:			_____	_____
PART TWO:	_____			
PART THREE:	_____			
PART FOUR:	_____	_____	_____	_____
PART FIVE:	_____		_____	_____
PART SIX:			_____	_____
PART SEVEN:	_____		_____	_____
TOTALS:	_____ (5)	_____ (1)	_____ (5)	_____ (5)
AVERAGES:	_____	_____	_____	_____

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Video-taped Teaching Simulations: Issues in the Testing and Evaluation of Foreign Teaching Assistants

by Patricia Byrd

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Introduction. A major responsiblity of training programs for foreign graduate teaching assistants (FTAs) is accurate evaluation of the FTAs' communication skills as teachers in the types of courses to which they are (or will be) assigned. Embedded in this seemingly simple statement are problems that are proving difficult to resolve. First, we are not at all sure what "communication skills" means: the definition of the totality and components of "communicative competence" shifts constantly--from scholar to scholar and from context to context. Second, we have not yet investigated in detail the features of particular disciplines and courses taught by FTAs. Third, we are unable to test with the accuracy that we would like, both because we do not know exactly what it is we need to test and because we do not yet have precise testing instruments.

As in other areas of FTA programming, we have been forced to plunge ahead and improvise testing and evaluation devices and procedures, hoping to improve them later. For reasons that will be discussed later, one of the most popular testing methods in FTA evaluation is the video-taped teaching simulation. In these tests, the FTA lectures on a topic appropriate to his/her teaching assignment for a strictly limited time before a small audience. The lecture is video-taped for later evaluation by trained raters using an evaluation

instrument that usually considers analysis of language along with other areas such as pedagogical skills and culturally correct handling of questioning.

In this report, I will discuss some of the issues that need to be considered in the development of appropriate and accurate video-taped simulation testing. An appendix lists linguistic and non-linguistic items that appear in testing instruments used in some institutions to evaluate the teaching skills of FTAs. These were collected from evaluation devices either used or proposed for use at these institutions: Georgia State University, Iowa State, SUNY-Buffalo, Texas Tech, the University of Nevada-Reno, and the University of Wyoming.[1]

Issues. The emergence of video-taped teaching simulations as a major feature in FTA testing/evaluation seems to result from two interrelated issues: 1) Program designers, teachers, and foreign students have not been convinced that other less direct types of tests are either accurate or fair. To FTAs as well as teachers, simulations have strong face validity. Moreover, when video-taped, these tests provide the institution with the comfort of having a record of the performance of the FTA that can be used to justify decisions about his/her teaching assignment. 2) Teachers, researchers, and program administrators have realized that the problems of FTAs are not just a matter of English-language skills but also involve cultural and pedagogical skills. Teaching simulations offer the student an opportunity to demonstrate the communicative compentence that results from the combination of skills needed for effective classroom teaching.

What this means is that we just like the idea of the teaching simulation. It feels right. So we do it. Or attempt to do it. What seems at first such a direct and effective measure of the things that we are supposed to measure soon turns out to be as complex as all the other aspects of FTA training programs.

When developing a video-taped simulation test, these questions need to be considered:

1. How is the test to be structured? How long will the FTA speak? On what? To whom? When? Where?
2. Who will evaluate the performance? How will they be selected? How trained? How rewarded?
3. What evaluation instrument will be used? What categories are best tested in this manner? What categories are we supposed to be testing anyway? What scale will be used? How will the scores be reported?
4. Is the test supposed to be a holistic evaluation of communicative competence or is it supposed to be diagnostic (for use in the training course)? Can it be both?
5. Since the administration and evaluation of these tests is greatly time-consuming, who pays for the testing?

In thinking about these questions, during and since the two weeks of the University of Wyoming Summer Institute on Foreign TA Training, I kept returning to definitions of communicative competence and pedagogical competence as the beginning points for answering even the first set of questions (about structure of the test). As we were advised in the background session on testing (Constantinides 1987), the very first questions to ask about testing are "Why are we testing?" and "What are we testing?" The answer to the first question seems to be that we are testing because we have been told by our institutions to test the ability of foreigners to function effectively as teachers of

undergraduate courses. The answer to the second question seems to be that we are not quite sure yet what it is that we are testing.

Studies of communicative competence and discussions of effective college teaching appear the best resources to use in defining the purposes of testing and evaluation for FTAs. Carroll (1980:5) diagrams the relationship between needs, curriculum, and testing:

Communicative Needs

Language	Testing
programmes	systems

His test-development method begins with a detailed, lengthy analysis of the communication needs of the person to be tested. Only after those needs have been specified can the language program be developed and the separate but parallel testing system established. Tentative steps have been taken to define the communicative needs of FTAs. For example, just about everyone involved in FTA testing and training agrees with Bailey (1982) that what the FTAs need is communicative competence and not just improved pronunciation. We must, however, acknowledge that we do not really know what communicative competence involves at this level and in this context. As we devise and revise our teaching simulation tests, we must reach much greater clarity about what the elements are that make up communicative competence in the context of undergraduate classes at particular institutions.

Communicative competence for teachers of undergraduates in U.S. universities. Numerous discussions now exist of communicative competence in general and of the elements that go into competent communication (Hymes 1972, Bailey: 1982, Savignon: 1983, etc.) Although much discussion and renaming of terms has gone on since the early 1970s, communicative competence continues to

be viewed as being composed of these basic elements: 1) linguistic competence, 2) socio-linguistic competence, 2) discourse competence, and 3) strategic competence. Linguistic competence is skill at the elements that make up a language--grammar, pronunciation, etc. Sociolinguistic competence is skill at using the language in culturally appropriate ways and includes non-verbal as well as verbal communication. Discourse competence involves skill at putting things together in coherent wholes. Strategic competence means that the person can appropriately enhance the communication or repair it when it breaks down. The strategically competent person has methods for expanding on the basic modes of communication and for fixing things when communication is not being achieved.

Typically, linguistic competence is seen as a basic necessity on which communicative competence is built. Carroll (1980) calls linguistic competence an "enabling" skill. Taking their lead from these discussions and from research that indicates that pronunciation is not the FTAs' only problem, program and test designers have been concerned to include sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competences in testing and training.

In order to do so, research into the nature of pedagogical competence is necessary to specify the features of communicative competence in the particular situation called "teaching to U.S. undergraduates."

Pedagogical competence. Carroll (1980) uses the following categories to investigate and describe the communicative needs of particular speakers in particular contexts: 1) participant identification, 2) purpose, 3) setting, 4) interaction, 5) instrumentality, 6) dialect, 7) target level, 8) events/activities, and 9) communicative key. "Interaction" lists the different people the speaker might need to interact with. "Instrumentality" is concerned with the medium, mode, and channels of communication--spoken vs. written, dialogue

vs. written to be spoken, face-to-face vs. telephone. "Target level" includes the various proficiency levels that might be needed. "Communicative key" refers to the tones and attitudes that might need to be expressed (formal vs. informal). Using this thorough analytical strategy, we should be able to develop more accurate descriptions of the nature of communication by teachers in particular disciplines.

Beginnings have been made by ethnographic studies of college teachers in action. For example, Bailey (1982) uses the ethnographic methods of Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) to analyze the communication acts used by U.S. and foreign TAs in their classes. Using their typology, she found these activities: 1) elicits, 2) structures, 3) reviews, 4) checks, 5) informs, 6) bonds, 7) administrates, 8) markers, 9) conclusions, and 10) others (including asides to themselves rather than to the students). For example, methods used by the TAs to give information to the students are called "informs," while things that are said or done to increase the emotional ties between the TA and his/her students are called "bonds." Using this classification system, she was able to detail the differences between various types of TAs as well as between U.S. and foreign TAs.

In addition to the research activities suggested above, we can profit from discussions already in print of the characteristics of effective university teachers. Lowman (1984) and Eble (1983), writing for teachers of undergraduate courses at U.S. colleges and universities, analyze the nature of such teaching and the skills that are necessary for success. Both writers identify two major skills needed for success in teaching U.S. undergraduates: 1) excellent public speaking skills for leading discussion sections as well as for more formal lecturing, and 2) excellent human relations skills to satisfy the emotional needs of their students. We must be careful to interpret their discussions

accurately. The interpersonal relationships that they are describing are quite superficial--knowing the names of students, not being unkind to students in public, keeping office hours. They strongly advise that teachers are not counselors and must not get too deeply involved with students.

Discussions of teaching frequently divide methods from manner. Teachers can, for example, give information through problem solving, discussion, lecturing, while being formal or informal. Thus, FTA testing and evaluation (as well as FTA training programs) should carefully distinguish between the teaching techniques being used and the personality of the FTA.

After recognizing that a teacher's major responsibilities will involve clear and enthusiastic presentations, we must next find out how these characteristics are realized in different departments. It is probably true that clarity and enthusiasm manifest themselves in different ways in engineering than they do in foreign languages or in mathematics. The testing program for evaluation and selection of FTAs can only be accurate if based on teaching styles and manner considered appropriate by the discipline being taught.

Fitting all the analyses and information into one system. In order to select items for the evaluator to focus on while viewing the teaching simulation, the test developer must decide which of the features of communicative competence and pedagogical competence are absolutely essential for teaching success. This attempt needs to be based on a collapsing of the two analyses--how do the features of pedagogical competence fit into the structure of communicative competence?

Linguistics Competence----> the language skills involved in lecturing

Sociolinguistic Competence----> the cultural skills involved in appropriate behavior as a teacher to U.S. undergraduates

Discourse Skills----> the organizational skills involved in making whole lectures, whole class sessions, and whole courses that fit the cultural expectations of U.S. undergraduates

Strategic Skills----> the high level of knowledge and experience needed to understand what is going wrong and knowing how to fix it; skill at enhancing the communication

The linguistic nature of pedagogical competence. Bailey (1982) found that students with linguistic competence below the 1+ FSI level could not be successful in the classroom no matter how good their interpersonal skills. For FTAs with language skills at such a low level, the video-taped simulation test is most likely a waste of time, energy, and funding. Bailey's finding suggests that a less-costly, more efficient manner of separating out this lower level should be used, first to establish English-language proficiency levels as a basis for entering training, and second to prevent misuse of the simulation testing.

One method for screening the communication skills of FTAs that has been suggested is using a non-direct (TOEFL or the Michigan Test) or semi-direct test (such as TSE/SPEAK or FSI) to make the first cut in evaluating a group of FTAs. Students who fall below some basic level (1+ on FSI or 200 on TSE/SPEAK) are placed into ESL training to improve their linguistic skills. If such a method is taken, then the simulation test of teaching ability would, logically,

need to test some other level of speaking ability since basic skills of pronunciation, stress, intonation, etc., have already been tested. We need to think through the skills involved in lecturing and public speaking so that these are the skills being tested by the teaching simulation rather than the "enabling" skills of basic pronuncation, stress, etc.

Most of us would agree that being a good conversationalist does not guarantee that one will be a good lecturer--and vice versa. (This generalization is as true for native speakers of English as for FTAs.) What linguistic features distinguish lecturing from conversing? Lecturers take longer turns, speaking frequently for most of the class period with only brief turn-taking by students. Lecturers generally need to speak louder and with more voice projection. Or they must learn to modulate their voices through public address systems. Lecturers repeat in patterns different from in conversation, going back over phrases and terms that should be put in notes by students. Lecturers are expected to use a larger and more educated vocabulary. Lecturers are expected to use longer and more obviously complete sentences. Lecturers are expected to be able to write and talk at the same time.

Sociolinguistic aspects of pedagogical competence. Sociolinguistic competence in the classroom involves appropriate body language and personality factors that are deemed correct by U.S. undergraduates for university teachers. All of the cultural features of pedagogy might fit here, including culturally acceptable ways of dealing with questions.

Discourse aspects of pedagogical competence. Discourse features in the classroom would include the ways that the teacher provides organization and connectedness to the course. Linguistic features such as the use of transition words and phrases seem most naturally to fit in this category. Culturally conditioned matters of timing and organization are also a part of discourse--

whole courses as well as individual class periods have beginnings, middles, and ends.

Strategic aspects of pedagogical competence. The skills needed by teachers to analyze and repair poor communication might fit here. In addition, strategic competence could include teaching methods such as use of the blackboard for enhancement of communication.

Conclusion. Although the result is a little ragged, features of pedagogical competence fit into the subdivisions of the communicative competence model to suggest the beginnings of a new model. One great advantage of the combined communicative-pedagogical competence model for our purposes is that it keeps us focused on the communication skills needed in the teaching context. Clearly, our institutions are asking FTA training programs to build, enhance, or repair communication skills and not the content area knowledge and skills that are the responsibility of the academic departments themselves.

A difficult issue in the use of a communicative-pedagogical competence model as the basis for a testing system is deciding how to weight the different subsections to devise a total score. While some evaluation systems currently in use assume that each of the four areas has equal importance, this weighting of the elements could lead to a distorted evaluation of an FTA's communication skills. After all, is linguistic competence 25% of communicative competence? Can part scores for each section be added together and divided by four to equal communicative competence? Scholars of communicative competence would probably answer "No." The communicative competence model, in fact, tells us that skill at communication is a complex of related skills that cannot easily be separated from each other. Some method will need to be devised for scoring the test that recognizes the complexity of communicative competence. This method should also take into account the compensation skills that many non-native speakers of

English have developed, so that effective use of the blackboard compensates for less than perfect public speaking skills, for example.

In sum, we do not yet know nearly as much as we should to be as accurate as we would like in evaluating the pedagogical and communicative skills of FTAs. Yet we seem to be moving in an appropriate and a productive direction as we investigate the nature of communication in the U.S. undergraduate classroom. On the basis of our clearer understanding of such communication, we can then have testing and training programs that fit the needs of our institutions and of the FTAs.

Appendix

Consolidation of Items from Various Evaluation Forms

I. Items that refer to language

1. pronunciation
2. intonation
3. grammar
4. fluency
5. stress and intonation
6. pitch
7. vocal variety
8. vocal quality
9. volume
10. needs to speak louder
11. needs to speak slower
12. needs to speak faster
13. hesitates often in speaking
14. needs to articulate more clearly
15. speaks in a monotone
16. needs to practice use of pauses to signal emphasis
17. needs to practice use of voice to vary emphasis
18. rate
19. comprehensibility
20. use of English
21. needs to practice the following sounds (circle the appropriate symbols): /r/ /l/ /0/ /d/ /b/ /v/ /ɪ/

others:

22. needs to practice stress and intonation

in statements

in questions

to achieve special emphasis

others:

23. needs to practice the following grammatical structures:

--singular/plural distinction

--3rd person singular, present tense

--tenses

--use of BE as a linking verb

--use of BE in passive constructions

--articles

--others

II. Items that refer to non-language issues

1. purpose of presentation
2. quality of information
3. quantity of information
4. introduction of topic
5. development of topic through examples
6. easy to follow
7. use of main and subordinate points
8. signposting
9. use of transitions and internal summaries
10. teacher's check of student comprehension
11. ability to answer questions
12. familiarity with cultural code
13. appropriate nonverbal behavior
14. appropriate register

15. basic listening ability
16. question-handling and responding
17. developing of explanation
18. clarity of expression
19. use of supporting evidence
20. eye contact
21. use of chalkboard
22. teacher presence
23. use of the body
24. instructor effectivenss
25. first-day-of-class skills
26. Is the speaker well prepared?
27. Is the speaker well organized?
28. Is there an introduction? Conclusion?
29. Does the speaker present material in an interesting way?
30. Does the speaker emphasize important concepts?
31. Non-verbal communication: eye contact, facial expression, hand gestures, use of space, visual aids, feedback and rapport with students
32. appropriate beginning "cues"
33. organization
34. use of detail
35. appropriate concluding "cues"
36. non-verbal communication
37. classroom techniques
38. projection?
39. clear?

40. dynamism?

41. conversational?

42. fluency?

43. nonverbal communication?

44. supportive material?

45. overall effect

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1. Through the FTA Clearinghouse at the University of Wyoming, a number of institutions have made available copies of the testing instruments they have developed for use in video-taped simulation testing. For information on getting copies of those instruments, contact Professor Janet Constantinides, English Department, University of Wyoming, Laramie, WY 82071.

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Proceedings from Working Group # 1
Claire K. Langham, group facilitator

An OVERVIEW of FOREIGN TA TRAINING

Background Introduction

Effective and efficient FTA training is dependent upon targeting instruction in English, pedagogy, and cultural awareness, to meet the specific needs of the FTAs' varied teaching assignments. Initially, the objective of our working group was an understanding of the "sub-culture" and discipline-specific requirements for training an FTA to teach in a particular subject area. We found that these issues were embedded in a broader context within which any training program operates. While this presentation of working papers proceeds from the general to the more specific, much of the work evolved in the reverse order.

The seven topics we addressed seemed an ambitious goal for a two week Institute. Nonetheless, we felt all of them were important to improving FTA Training. Other working groups focused on FTA testing and evaluations, and developing a broad base of university community support. In effect, while one group concentrated on screening the "in-put product" (incoming trainees), and another on institutional marketing of a training program, we addressed ourselves to defining training procedures and processes.

Therefore, the papers which follow represent our concern to:

1) clarify terms relating to FTA Training;

2) provide an Overview of Design Components in FTA Training Programs to serve for both comparison and as a check list in developing new programs;

3) generate a more accessible Information Classification System for the growing volume of material in the Clearing House on FTA Training;

4) gather information to Assess the Needs of FTA's and their departments, which thereby determines the content of FTA Training Program;

5) describe Pedagogical/Teaching Skills as they relate to patterns of TA duties to more effectively target training to transactional skills and corresponding English usage;

6) describe Five Phases in an FTA Training Program ; to assist trainers in designing their training programs;

7) develop guidelines so that FTA's can learn to Map the sub-culture of their university, discipline, department, and classroom;

8) extend our understanding of foreign TA's beyond the framework of the Institute through research now in progress within the American university classroom.

The working group matched the composition of the Institute -half experienced and half new to foreign TA training. Responsibilities for the working papers described above were divided among group members. Although the projects were discussed jointly, both in small working groups and with other participants at the Institute, primary authorship remains with the individual. As noted, these are working papers, so refinements, additions, and improvements should be incorporated as the field expands.

[EDITOR'S NOTE -- The preceding paper lists eight projects that this working group undertook. The papers included in this volume describe only six of those. There are no papers for projects five and eight in this volume. But both of those topics will be considered in the 1987 Wyoming/NAFSA Institute on Foreign TA Training. It is possible that papers on those topics may appear at a later time.]

The intent of this first national conference on the training of foreign teaching assistants was to share information and familiarize newcomers to this rapidly developing field. Consistent with these aims there were participants with experience training foreign TA's and others without. Participants without experience had immediate concerns because of their responsibilities to start programs and/or develop polices to train FTA's as an extension of their university work in ESL or foreign student programming.

The process of sharing information at the Institute provoked two distinct reactions. First, it was reassuring to find one was not alone and that both concern and information was increasing. The network and clearing house on FTA's initiated by Kathleen Bailey at UCLA, then continued and expanded by Janet Constantinides at the University of Wyoming provides a good beginning and is growing steadily. But then the second reaction, especially strong to newcomers, was a sense of being overwhelmed, unable to see the forest for the trees and equally frustrated by not having a "field manual" as a guide to help identify the constituent parts of that "forest."

It is a primary task of scholars and participants in a new field to clarify terms assuring a shared terminology among the practitioners and identify emergent patterns providing newcomers with an overview that helps orient them quickly to the dynamics of the situation. The working papers presented here should serve as an early "field manual" to meet the need for both an overview and a classifying system to better access the details of FTA training programs. In our early discussions we recognized that words such as "foreign," "teaching assistant," and "American classroom " had a range of meanings that would be important to delineate.

Working Paper #1
Claire K. Langham
#1 Clarification of Terms in FTA Training

FTA Training

The early discussions on the FTA "problem" have centered on lack of fluency in English. The public and press continue to use this focus. However, there are several overlapping components in functioning as an effective TA. There is overlap in these components. These communicative (and discipline) competencies are necessary for both native and non-native TA's.

1) Linguistic - English language competence;

2) Cultural - Presentational/Behavioral competence for the American university classroom and the specific discipline to convey meaning in a manner that the receiver understands;

3) Pedagogical - University level teaching skills; and

4) Academic - Competence in the discipline.

Among these components, shortcomings in the skills of the first (linguistic) have received all the attention, and the last (discipline competence) is assumed by virtue of an academic department's admission of the student to the graduate program. The actual problem may be more complex.

The amount and kind of training needed depends on the graduate student's competence in each area. Strengths in one or more components generally compensate for weakness in another area. For example, native English speaking graduate students familiar with American undergraduate classroom culture, may "get by" with weak teaching skills. The undergraduates understand each word and many can fit them together to create an organized coherence. In contrast, if an FTA with a heavy accent presents a carefully planned, well organized section, mispronounced words are mentally corrected by listeners to fit logically. Teaching skills, such as effective use of the blackboard, also compensate for a heavy accent. Strongly developed non-verbal communicative skills make up for a lack of words - pantomime is an example. The listener's process of mentally compensating for a speaker's mispronunced, mumbled, or mis-spoken words occurs normally between native speakers. Establishing the willingness of both TA's and students to exercise "communicative flexibility" (Gumperz, 1982:14) is key. Establishing rapport may be significant in facilitating opening the channels to communicative flexibility.

The definition of an FTA training program or FTA evaluation should specify the inclusion of one, two, three, or all of the above components. The term FTA training cannot be assumed to automatically incorporate all five competencies.

Foreign

We used the term "foreign" because it is commonly used and understood. International TA (ITA) is an alternative possibility already in use, however it is confusing since "international" includes American TA's.

Non-native English speaking (NNES) or non-native speaking (NNS) is longer, more awkard, and not necessarily more accurate. Native English speakers from India, Pakistan, Singapore, Hong Kong, Australia, New Zealand, and England, are "foreign." They may not require as much FTA training in language, but the cultural awareness of the typical behaviors in the American university classroom may be equally new to these native English speakers.

There also exists a category of "foreign born" TA's. These are immigrants, who may or may not have a problematic accent. Thus, the term "foreign" includes individuals who are non-native English speaking even though they may have, or are acquiring American citizenship.

Fluency in English depends on its function. A non-native FTA, knowledgeable in economics, for instance, may be more "functionally fluent" than, let us say, a native English speaking high school drop out. The definition of fluency or competence in English is discussed in detail in the working papers on Testing and Evaluation of FTA's.

Teaching Assistant

A teaching assistant at a university is one who assists a professor. This teaching assistance takes many forms, although the job title is the same - "teaching assistant." Enumerating the responsibilities of TA's, the range of duties spanned the more passive role of "grader" to almost full concern for teaching a course. In fact, several individuals at the Institute with the job title (and compensation) of a "TA" are actually in charge of design, implementation and evaluation of FTA training. Particularly in individualized learning situations such as foreign language or English writing classes, TA's are more likely to, in effect, be responsible for far more than "assisting" a professor. They teach the students.

Teach

The word "teach" was explored. From resource books on teaching, we found close to 50 verbs that are used to describe actions that teachers utilize "to teach." Since an FTA trainer is to prepare graduate students to "teach" it becomes necessary to recognize which of these many skills are most needed for specific TA assignments. Eventually a professional, experienced teacher will need to effectively use all of these "teaching skills." The challenge to a FTA trainer is to target, prioritize, and group similar skills, and link these to communicative competence in English.

We undertook this challenge of grouping related teaching skills and targeting them to specific types of TA assignments. (See section on TA Duties and Skills).

American university classrooms

It was interesting to participants at the Institute to compare and contrast the expectations and norms of behavior at the our various geographically diversified universities.

For example, we discovered variations in acceptable useage of forms of address, concepts of punctuality, classroom behaviors, expectations of politeness, and attendance. The ways a student addresses their teaching assistant contrasted from use of Mr. or Ms. to using first names or nicknames. At some university classroom sections, students are expected to arrive on time and stay until dismissed; at others it is not uncommon for students to arrive and depart like consumers at a market with peak attendance periods. Codes of dress as well as forms of respect also vary, not only from one geographic region to another, but also depend on the specific university, and from one academic discipline to another.

Thus, while there is an overall "cultural pattern" recognized as American, there is a "university" sub-culture, with further sub-types on different campuses, further refined by more specific cultural patterns within disciplines, until we encounter the variations of individual personalities.

Working Paper #2
Claire K. Langham

INFORMATION CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

This classification system represents an open-ended, expandable, cross reference and filing arrangement. It follows an order of progressive stages of information needed in developing an FTA training program. The seven major categories (Roman numerals I - VII) are divided into specific sub-categories having decimal breakdowns.

The value in establishing a standardized classification/filing system for all professionals in the FTA training field is most apparent in information management, access, and information sharing. Cross referencing within files and in the index facilitate access to overlapping resource material and terminology. Additions or modifications (improvements) are welcomed, and should be adapted uniformly. This standardized system is especially appropriate for clearing house materials and is recommended for adoption by professionals in FTA training.

Sub-categories are given as examples, and should be expanded. The conceptualization for this classification system was developed by the author as a working paper. Its adoption or adaptation in final form will necessarily be at the discretion of the professionals in charge of the FTA clearing house materials. Items assigned appropriate categories would retain the serial numbers indicative of their filing sequence, which is placed after a hyphen for numerical order and/or slash marks for calendar sequence (eg. Cornell University's 1986 Final Report was the fifth such item received and is coded VII.1 - 5 / 86 so all subsequent reports in that series will bear the very same identification except for the year).

I. Background

1 Problem

2 Issues

II. References

1 Bibliogrpahy - books

2 " - articles

3 " of news articles

4 Handbooks

5 Audio-Visual materials

6 Order Forms

7 Network -

names & addresses of people involved in FTA training, TA training, & conferences on TA's.

III. Implementation

1 List of processes

2 Legislation

3 Proposals

4 Regulations/ policies

IV. Testing/Screening/Evaluations

1 Pre and post training evaluations

2 Videos

3 Evaluations of FTA's in actual classrooms

4 Consultations with FTA's

V. Program Design and Description of FTA Training

1 Various Specific University Programs

2 Comparison Chart on FTA Training Programs
(see the following section on components of FTA Training Programs)

VI. FTA Training Program - Content

1 Cultural Awareness Skills

1.1 in general

1.2 for American culture

1.3 for American universities

1.4 for specific disciplines

1.5 learning to do it yourself - "mapping" a sub-culture

VI. 2 Pedagogical/Teaching Skills

2.1 Syllabus

2.2 Lesson Plans

2.3 Academic Discipline -
background expectations, requirements,

2.4 Teaching Skills Development
(from the classification system
based on teaching duties, Langham)

2.4.1 One to One (tutorial) skills

2.4.2 Labs

2.4.3 Group Leadership Skills

2.4.4 Presentation Skills

2.4.4.1 lecturing

2.4.4.2 explaining

2.4.4.3 slowing down speech

2.4.4.4 restatement

2.4.4.5 examples

2.4.4.6 gestures

2.4.5 Organizational Skills

2.4.5.1 preparing own syllabus

2.4.5.2 preparinng lectures

2.4.6 Evaluative Skills

2.4.6.1 preparing exams

2.4.6.2 grading exams

VI. 2.5 FTA teaching techniques

(strategies for non-native speakers)

2.5.1 Use of blackboards

2.5.2 " " handouts

2.5.3 Non-verbals - body language

3 Linguistic and Communication Skills

3.1 English as a Second Language

3.1.1 Pronunciation

3.1.2 Intonation

3.1.3 Grammar

3.1.4 Vocabulary

3.1.4.1 transitional words/phrases

3.1.4.2 specific to subculture

3.2 Public Speaking Skills

4 Discipline specific content material for FTA training

4.1 Humanities

4.2 Natural Sciences

4.3 Math and Applied Sciences

(Agriculture, Computers, Medicine, etc.)

4.4 Engineering

VII. FTA Training Program Evaluation

1. Evaluating the overall program design
2. FTA self evaluation
3. Changes/Modifications in FTA training program design
4. Issues
5. State of the Art

Working Paper #3
Claire K. Langham

FOREIGN TA TRAINING PROGRAMS:

An Overview of Design Components & Comparison Chart of FTA Program Formats

The planning of a foreign TA training program necessitates at least fourteen design component considerations. Many of these decisions are inter-related. For example, budget determines time and staff. Equally true, time and staff determine budget.

The Chart is intented for use in developing an FTA training program, and a convenience in comparing programs from other universities. It provides a guide to make it possible to see the forrest (the FTA Training Program) for the trees (the detailed components and their differences). This guide could also be used to chart the dynamic changes in an FTA training program at one university from year to year. This chart was generated by participants from several working groups in a brain storming session naming all the components we knew. As the FTA training field develops, the options on this chart will expand.

The categories in the chart which follows are intended as self explanatory and are discussed in the other working papers, therefore I will only describe them briefly here.

1) Language/Communication Evaluation

A major consideration is diagnostic evaluation of language and communicative competency. There are a number of options. These are discussed in detail in the working papers on FTA Testing and Evaluations. Will there be a diagnosis for placement? What type of screening will be used? Academic department ? ESL department ? TA Training Program ? A panel of all of the above? or no screening? What type of test will be used? An interview? A presentation? A standardized test ? Discipline specific or general?

An issue that arises when FTA's are screened for communicative competence is "discrimination." If more than English language is tested, then why aren't native English speakers tested for their "communicative competence" before getting the TA position. And if foreign TA's are an issue, why not foreign professors? The issues are interrelated, the answers are not easy.

2) Training Program Format

Turitz (1984:43-50) from a survey of institutions with FTA training programs in 1982 divided programs into two basic types: "the seminar-type program meets throughout the term for a given number of hours per week; the orientation-type meets for a short period of time prior to the beginning of the foreign TA's first term.

At the FTAT Wyoming Institute in 1986, we discussed three formats: orientation; orientation and seminar; or seminar. The orientation and seminar combine both types. In some instances, the program format is broadly called "workshops" (initial and follow up) instead of either orientation or seminar "classes."

3) Timing

Timing is closely related to the type of format since orientation occurs pre-term, seminar during the term, and the combination format does both.

Another timing consideration is addressed in #9. Are the participants taking the training prior to TAing, or concurrently with their TA assignments? There are advantages and disadvantages to each. Training prior to TAing prepares TA's for the challenges they are about to face. However, TAing is still an abstraction. Concurrent training helps TA's resolve "real" problems. Timing of training depends on the degree of readiness of the individual TA, and the type of TA assignment. Ideally, assistance to TA's would occur both prior to and concurrent with their first TA position.

4) Follow Up

Follow up refers to assistance after the new TA is in the classroom. The type of follow up varies: a follow up session in a workshop or seminar class; direct observation of the TA in the actual classroom they TA; individual feedback in consultation; or no follow up.

There is an advantage to observing the TA in the actual classroom, obtaining feedback from the undergraduates through questionnaires (or informal discussion with the TA absent), and then individually consulting with the new FTA to assist them improve their teaching effectiveness. Videotaping the TA in the actual classroom so they can "observe themselves" is also a highly rated form of follow up.

Are there any consequences to the follow up? If a TA is not effective, as rated by their students and/or the qualified observer, how does this impact their next TA assignment?

5) Duration (Length & Instructional Hours)

How long is the inital training in terms of contact (instructional) hours prior to TAing? How many hours of follow up contact are scheduled after TAing begins? How many hours does this total?

6) Funding Sources

Funding is obviously a most important component. In some cases, all the funds come from one source, sometimes it is a combination. Grant funding may be for one time only. One of the working papers in these proceedings focuses on this issue of targeting and generating support.

7) Budget

This component is difficult to measure because costs are often hidden in support services provided by already existing offices and programs. One consideration is, what is the cost to the participating foreign TA? If they are required to arrive early, who pays room and board during that time?

8) Source of Staff and Numbers

Professionals already involved in FTA training come from a variety of academic departments and service programs. These usually include ESL, English, TA/Instructional Development Programs, Academic Departments, International Office, Education, Counseling, experienced TA's, or consultants. Significant informal advice and guidance for FTA's often comes from departmental administrative assistants and/or secretaries.

The source of staff may affect the political dynamics of the campus. Where is the influence? the expertise? the support?

9) FTA Participants

Who is eligible or required to receive training? Is the program for ALL new foreign graduate students? or ONLY those assigned to TA? Is it ONLY for those concurrently TAing, or those NOT YET TAing? or BOTH? Is training only for those needing the extra assistance based on diagnostic evaluations? or by request of the individual or department? Is training availble to experienced, but ineffective TA's with low evaluations?

Is there training for ALL TA's in the discipline, or only FTA's? Is training available for faculty? new? foreign?

10) Requirement/(Incentive) of Training

Is training mandatory - required? Is it optional? If it is required, are there exemptions? What are the criteria? Is there course credit? How much?

Is there incentive - such as a stipend for their extra time in training? Is there a consequence to the training - if standards are not met, is there no TA assignment?

11) Content of FTA Training

Improved pronunciation is only one part of improving teaching. It may be difficult to identify the percentage of time to devote to each component, since there is obvious overlap, but various programs put emphasis on different aspects of TAing. The content categories are: English language improvement; Communication skills - speech; Pedagogy/teaching skills; Cultural awareness understanding; and Discipline specific TA training.

12) Legal Issues

This check list would be incomplete without forethought to issues of discrimination and employment requirements. The issues are still hazy. Graduate students serve as TA's in exchange for financial support for their academic studies. To what extent are they employees of the university and to what extent are they "supported" graduate students performing the obligations of graduate students? Even within one university, teaching requirements and compensation vary department to department. Are "foreign" or "non-native English speaking" TA's being treated differently than other "citizen" graduate students? Is this legitimate? Not all native speakers are effective TA's, nor all foreign TA's automatically ineffective. Are FTA's being singled out for blame or US TA's excluded from assistance in their assignments as TA's? Controversy over foreign TA's is generating notice on all TA concerns.

A gradually increasing amount of resource material is becoming available for foreign TA training. This includes texts, handbooks, basic handouts, demonstration videos, and suggested activities. The expanding choices decrease the previous necessity for each trainer to "re-invent the wheel," and provides more time for adapting materials to individual FTA needs.

14) FTA Profile

An FTA training program has a specific purpose - to prepare a foreign graduate student to more effectively perform their duties as a teaching assistant to American undergraduates in a particular class.

An ideal FTA training program moves from the general orientation and educational goals to the more specific requirements of a specific FTA assignment. What are the academic disciplines of the FTA's? What are their TA assignments ? only grading ? supervising labs ? conducting discussion sessions ? presenting new material ?

University teaching is a profession. It is overwhelming to train a newcomer to a professional field in everything at once. An FTA trainer needs to concentrate on the immediate tasks of the FTA and prioritize the learning goals.

To facilitate targeting the type of TA duty with the teaching skill area, the next section presents a classification system based on the academic discipline, with TA duties linked to the types of teaching skills needed. This classification system is derived from the author's current research at UCSD, including an analytical diagram of observed TA and student classroom behaviors. Space is provided for noting appropriate FTA training exercises. The theoretical framework for this analysis is an expansion of Mehan's (1979) socio-linguistic study of classroom interactions. (see paper on "Discourse Strategies").

Chart of Design Components

C. Langham
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FOREIGN TA TRAINING PROGRAMS:

An Overview of Design Components

& Comparison Chart of FTA Program Formats

Components of Training Programs	U. of Wyoming	U. of CA San Diego	Univ. of Georgia	YOUR PROGRAM
1. Language/Communication Evaluation				
Diagnosis				
Type of screening				
" " test				
None				
2. Training Program Format				
Orientation				
Orientation & Seminar				
Seminar (workshops)				
3. Timing				
Pre-term				
Pre & during				
During term				
4. Follow up				
Follow up sessions				
" " in classroom of TA				
No follow up				
5. Duration				
No. of initial contact hours				
Number of follow up " "				
Total no. of contact hours				
6. Funding Source(s)				
ESL program budget				
English dept. "				
Graduate Dean's office				
TA Development Program				
Instructional Development				
Academic depts. (individually)				
International Students Office				
Grant				
Other				
7. Budget (approximate total)				
Staffing costs				
Materials (incl. AV equip)				
Consultations				
Totals				

FTA Training Programs - design components & program formats

	U. of Wyoming	U. of CA San Diego	Univ. of Georgia	Your Program
8. Source of Staff & Numbers*				
ESL				
English				
TA/Instructional Dev. Trainers				
Academic Depts				
International Center				
Consultants				
TAs (experienced)				
Other				
*(Percentage of time)				
9. FTA Participants				
all new foreign grad. students				
only " " " " assigned to teach				
those concurrently "TAing"				
" not yet "				
both of above				
all FTAs				
only " needing training (after diagnosis)				
10. Requirement/(Incentive) of Training				
Mandatory/required				
Optional				
Required but many exemptions				
Course Credit				
No " "				
Remuneration("carrot")				
"No pass - no teach" ("stick")				
11. Percentage of time on each of following:				
English language improvement				
Communication skills - speech				
Pedagogy/teaching skills				
Culutral awareness understanding				
12. Legal Issues				
"Discrimination"				
Employment Requirements				
. Reading/Resource Materials				
Texts used				
Handbook				
Basic Handouts				
14. FTA profile*				
Disciplines				
TA assignments				
Skill areas in training				

*(see categories next page)

Working Paper #4
Claire K. Langham

TRAINING FOREIGN TA's PEDAGOGICAL TEACHING SKILLS

A Matrix System to Target FTA Training

The task of the ESL/FTA program is to train new foreign graduate students to teach. In order to teach someone else how to teach, and appropriate English usage for that purpose, it is necessary for the trainer to understand the variety of TA duties, related skills, as well as the discipline's particular "sub-culture."

What are the duties of a TA? If you were to ask various TA's for a succinct definition of what they do as a TA, their responses could differ appreciably. (The descriptions could easily be as divergent as the six blind men who individually described an "elephant" by the feel of just one of the widely dispersed parts of its anatomy, the ear....leg....flank....tusk....trunk....& tail.)

Such disparity makes clarity of purpose important in an FTA training program where many of the students have little experience with the diverse roles TA's have in an American university. Both the pedagogic and English language skills that are to be mastered in the program should match with needs of the group in training. Eventually as a professional teacher in a university, all the skills should be mastered.

The matrix presented on the following page was developed as a conceptual aid in planning FTA training. The variables related to foreign TA's are many. Two major considerations are the FTA's discipline and their TA duties. Specific teaching skills and language competencies that the FTA must be prepared to use can then be deduced. This matrix has been arranged so that useful correlations can be drawn between several lists that were compiled separately during the course of the Institute.

The fundamental dynamic which underlies the organization of the matrix builds on observations during research of characteristic patterns of communication between the TA and students. For example, on a one to one level, as in office hours or tutoring, the TA will more frequently be responding in some manner to a question or request from the student. In discussion sections, the TA should stimulate and balance participation. In contrast, in presentations, the students' turns at speaking are few. Therefore, listening and interpreting skills are used more in office hours, group leadership skills in discussion sections; and in contrast, public speaking skills - including ability to interpret American students' non-verbal audience reactions - become more pertinent for lecturing.

This classification system should help the trainer to determine whether a certain training exercise in the methodology of teaching matches the skill areas needed by an FTA according to their TA assignment. Each of these areas have functionally specific English usage. There are innumerable training exercises in English and teaching, the entries shown in that column are just a sampling of many in the clearing house on FTA materials gathered by Institute Director Janet Constantinides.

Training and Skills Reference Matrix for TA Duties and Academic Departments

Discipline of section	Type of TA Duty	Skill Area	Training Exercises
		One to One Skills	
	Office Hours	- Listening	"Office Hours"
		- understanding	(tape)
Music	Tutorials	- paraphrasing (active listening)	
Chemistry		- Reacting	
Physics		- responding	
Biology	Labs	- explaining	"Labs"
Second language	Drill section	- providing feedback	(handout)
Art	Practice session	- Encouraging	
Mathematics	Problem solving	- guiding	
Computer science	section	- supervising	
Engineering			
Econ. & Bus.		Group Leading	"Vocabulary
Engl. comp.	Discussion	Skills	for
Communications	sections	- Leading	TA-Student
History		- motivating	Interaction"
Literature		- coordinating/ balancing participation	(handout)
Political sci.			
Phylosophy		- Questioning	
Psychology		- asking leading questions	
Sociology		- turning questions to elicit more from the students	
Urban studies			
etc.		- probing for hidden assumptions	
		- summarizing	"Strategies for FTA's" (handout)
		Presentation Skills	
	Lecturing	- Public speaking; structuring presentations, pacing, eye contact, etc.	
		- expounding	"Vocabulary for
	Following	- Communicating	organization/
	professor's	- illustrating	clarity"
	syllabus	- exemplifying	(handout)
		Organizational Skills	"Teaching objectives planning sheet" (handout)
	Preparing lectures	- Organizing	
	Review sessions	- choosing/selecting	
		- deciding	
	Preparing own	- Planning	"Beginning
	syllabus	- scheduling	a class" (handout)
		Evaluative Skills	
	Evaluating students	- Evaluating	
	Preparing exams	- testing	
	Reader/ grade exams	- grading	"Suggsetions
	Assigning grades	- rewarding	for graders" (handout)
	Monitoring exams		

Working Paper #6
Claire K. Langham

Five Phases in a Training Program

The purpose of this paper is to describe the phases in a training program. These five are also evident in other teaching/learning situations and generally follow a patterned sequence. The five phases or pattern of teaching/learning, that I describe consist of:

1) establishing rapport
2) developing awareness
   (by both the teacher and the learners)
3) presenting/receiving content
4) practicing a repetoire of skills
5) receiving constructive feedback

Although variations, overlapping, and recycling of the pattern will occur, this five phase schema is a practical conceptual framework for 1) designing a training program and 2) observing the progress in a teaching/learning situation. The phases are somewhat elastic in that the time frame for each may expand or contract depending on the schedule for training/learning. Thus, a semester course as well as a one day workshop should contain all the phases.

Prior to describing each of these phases in detail, I would like to briefly explain these terms with reference to an FTA training program. First, there is the phase of introductions and getting acquainted. Secondly, the trainer helps the FTA's become aware of the culture of the American classroom at their university. (A TA makes the students aware of the course requirements and expectations, the syllabus.) The trainer (or TA) becomes aware of the students' background abilites and knowledge. Concurrently, learners in this phase become more self-aware of what they know, and don't yet know, in relation to course goals. The third phase is presenting (and tailoring) content to the specifics of the learners' backgrounds. The fourth phase, practice, is both homework and class participation. The fifth phase of feedback is important because it can provide motivation to learn more or inhibit the desire to do so.

The pattern of these five phases may then recycle, that is, after feedback it is effective to re-establish rapport . The feedback generates a new level of awareness on the part of both the teacher/trainer and the learners. The teacher is more aware of their students' mastery, and the students are more aware of the teacher's expectations. As more content is presented, it can be better targeted to the learners' needs. In practicing the repetoire of skills (in class exercises or homework) students should have become more familiar with the type of assignments their second time through this phase . Then the repetition of feedback again recycles the process.

The recycling occurs, in effect, even though teachers and students may change. Both TA's and undergraduates bring expectations to their university sections based on past classroom experiences. When the expectations of the TA's match those of the undergraduates, sections proceed more smoothly. Generally, there is a shared sub-culture of academia, one that is learned by freshmen. Consistency in teaching facilitates learning.

However, within the university classroom in our pluralistic society, particularly for introductory courses, a range of expectations are often brought together by individuals of both genders, diverse racial, ethnic, national backgrounds, a range of ages, distinctive educational and life experiences, and varied academic motivations. When the TA is from another culture altogether the need to orchestrate harmonious blending of multiple expectations is even greater. This is why I emphasize to all FTA's the importance of letting students get to know them and getting to know their students.

The description of these phases is based on the author's professional experience observing TA's in section and designing training programs for FTA's. (It also draws upon a preliminary analysis of doctoral research on discourse strategies that facililtate learning in the university classroom, especially among individuals of different cultural backgrounds - see paper on "Discourse Strategies". Further analysis of the research data is required to determine outcome variations when these phases are not all present.)

Phase 1 - Establishing Rapport

To establish rapport means to create a relation of harmony, accord, affinity, to mutually identify and move together toward similar goals. The importance of establishing rapport is that it then opens the channels for communication. It sets the tone for all else that follows. First impressions have a lasting effect.

Establishing rapport essentially means to create a human connection, in this case between a trainer and FTA's, or between the FTA and the students. Mutual respect is part of establishing rapport. Let your FTA's know that they are knowledgeable, important, and valued. If you can convey that you are available to assist rather than judge them, respect and rapport will more readily begin.

In most cases, establishing rapport involves introductions, getting acquainted, and perhaps breaking the ice with a bit of humor. The socially appropriate manner in which rapport is established varies not only by national culture, but the patterns may be distinctive in different disciplines. (See the paper on Mapping a Discipline as a Sub-Culture). Some educators refer to the initial phase as "setting the classroom atmosphere." In public speaking, establishing rapport is known as "warming up the audience."

Names are an important part of becoming better acquainted. Names are also useful in addressing someone. For example, in southern California, we do not use standard impersonal forms of address for TA's or professors. We do not use for example, "Professor, or "Teacher." The general usage is to address the Professor as "Professor Smith," or "Dr. Smith" and the TA as Mr. Smith or John. Therefore, an initial step in feeling comfortable is knowing each others names. Students feel their TA has a genuine interest in their learning when he or she remembers and addressees the student by name, and recalls something personal, such as an interest in a sport or research project.

The techniques for establishing rapport are varied and should suit the situation and the preference of individual FTA's. Informal seating arrangements, especially a semi-circle, are more conducive to discussions. Movable chairs and desks make this possible. Encouraging students to speak can be done through positive reinforcement, even if they are shy or hesitant. Techniques for getting to know students within the class include: questions with a show of hands for responses; questions answered on index cards; and individual introductions or having students in a very large class at least introduce themselves to others seated nearby.

For FTA training, I demonstrate all these techniques. I use them at the beginning of the training session. Afterward, I indicate that I have demonstrated techniques that they can use in their classroom sections. In FTA orientation/training, I have the new FTA's practice introducing themselves in 2 - 3 minute presentations just a they will to their students at the beginning on the first day of section.

The technique of a show of hands is the quickest way to learn something about your students. Generally a TA can ask how many are majoring in the academic discipline of the course being taught, then name a few other likely disciplines, or ask one student for their major, then ask how many others also have the same major. How many have not yet decided is also an appropriate question. The TA may ask how many are sophomores? freshmen? etc. How many have work experience in this field? Other similar questions may be asked.

The technique of responses on index cards permits a teacher to find out a little more about their students individually. The questions I use to demonstrate are appropriate to the FTA's and can be adapted for the classroom. I put the following or similar questions on the board:

Name
Where are you from?
Major
Previous Teaching Experience
Concerns or questions about TAing
What do you want to learn in this training program?
 or Why are you taking this course?
 or What do you hope to get from taking this program?

If there is time, an ice breaking game might be introduced. It is best if it relates to the academic discipline, or the FTA training in some way. For example, for FTA's, I like to use metaphors about teaching. I ask each participant to write their metaphor on the index card, then share it with others, first the person next to them, or in small groups, then several metaphors are shared with the group as a whole. This technique also introduces an alternative teaching format - the use of small groups.

To get started, I use my favorite teaching metaphor - "Teaching is like coaching: you can't do it for them. If they win, you win." (if the learners win, you win). Coaches show techniques and encourage the team players. In Bailey's (1982) study of communicative competence of non-native speaking TA's at UCLA, she developed a typology of TA's. The type of TA's undergraduates rated most highly for their teaching effectiveness were those she labeled "inspiring cheerleaders." This coach and cheerleader analogy leads us from establishing rapport into developing awareness. Coaches know their "team" players, their strengths and areas to improve.

I have devoted considerable space to explaining this first phase because I consider it very important. In a training program, it does not take as much time to establish rapport as the relative space I have taken to describe it here. It might be the initial fifteen minutes. In a classroom, five to ten minutes is adequate. Getting acquainted also occurs just before and after class, over coffee and during meals in training programs. Of course, rapport is to be maintained and repaired as needed.

Phase 2 - Developing Awareness

There are two significant aspects in this phase of developing awareness. First, the trainer or teacher makes the learners aware of the program/course goals, proceedures, rules, expectations, requirements. This is usually accomplished in a syllabus and introduction to the course. Secondly, both the teacher/trainer and the learners should become aware of their current level of mastery. This is often achieved through a diagnostic exam, practical exercises or classroom discussions.

In training programs for FTA's - discovering through discussions the FTA's perceptions of the American university classroom and teaching is an important part of phase 2 - developing awareness. Exercises for developing cultural awareness are included in the working paper on "Mapping an Ethnography of the American university classroom." For FTA's self-awareness of their teaching skills, videotapings of individual presentations is the method I find most effective.

Videotapings provide a mirror for the FTA to view themselves. Working in small groups, five is ideal, the TA's are also able to observe the strengths and weaknesses of others. To create a learning environment that is comfortable to learn by doing (experiential learning) I start with establishing a group rapport. I provide an

early opportunity to be videotaped so students can begin to feel comfortable with the process. The first presentation can be any topic that interests them - a hobby, their home country, their surprises when they first came to this country, etc. To avoid demonstrating a level of expertise too far above the students and inhibit them for fear of falling far short of the "model" I do not show a demonstration tape yet. I myself am not comfortable with individual critiques at this point in the learning process, so I generalize feedback through a discussion after the last presentation or video playback. On the board, the group generates a list of things they liked, and suggestions for improvements. I avoid terms like "good" and "bad."

After the first videotaping on an informal topic, FTA's are asked to explain a concept in their discipline in a 5 minute presentation. After video playback, again we discuss what we liked and what we would like to see improved. We then compare these comments with the previous discussion. Usually a quality exhibited in the informal presentation - enthusiasm for the topic - is lacking in the second, academic discipline related presentation.

It really is helpful to have the two rounds of videotaping of FTA's. If time is really limited, the viewing of video playback might be conducted individually in office hours. FTA's learn from each other's presentations. However, seeing oneself is a unique and valuable learning experience that is very highly rated by FTA's in evaluating training programs.

To give the reader a sense of program timing, if the training program consists of a day and a half (10 hours), then the first morning, approximately three hours, is devoted to phases one and two - establishing rapport and developing awareness. In this time frame, the lunch hour is for relaxing, and perhaps meeting experienced TA's, sympathic professors, and getting better acquainted. Seminars have more time, but less intensity. A combination orientation and seminar is preferred.

Phase #3 - Presenting/Receiving Content

This is the phase that generally is most associated with teaching: the content. In an FTA training program, the educational objective is to improve the competencies of the FTA. The content includes the communicative components of teaching described earlier: linguistic; cultural; pedagogical; and as appropriate, the academic discipline. In an FTA training program, the academic competency is usually limited to exercises presenting topics and correct pronunciation of discipline related terminology.

There are many skills used by teachers. Five general areas of teaching skills, described earlier are: organization, evaluation, presentation, group leading, and one to one supervising or tutoring. (See the cross reference matrix of Training Skills relevant to TA duties and departments). The matrix can serve to guide the trainer in targeting content appropriate for the FTA teaching duties.

This paper is an analysis of the phases of an FTA training program, and other learning experiences. It is not intended to include training exercises. It is however, intended as a methodology - a guide in planning and structuring a training program. Training exercises are becoming available in new FTA training manuals and materials.

Training content which incorporates English speaking for the specific purpose of teaching is very helpful to new FTA's. There are phrases in English that are general to most all academic disciplines. Some Phrases are used to organize a presentation: "Today we are going to talk about..... The main point is..... A second point is ....." Other phrases are used in leading group discussions, "Could you elaborate further?" "What does someone else think?" A list of these phrases appears elsewhere in the proceedings.

An important concept in presenting content, is that it is most effective when 1) the material is made relevant to the learners, i.e. presented so there is a basis of the familiar that serves as building blocks to the new; 2) the material can be assimilated in manageable amounts through practice. A teacher of swimming for example, would not promote mastery by students if the teaching was all lecture, with the students finally entering the water after all the content information was presented. The trainer is challenged to divide mastery into manageable building blocks knowing that the more experiential the training program, the greater the mastery.

An effective approach to presenting the content in an FTA training program is "role modeling." This is especially valid because the FTA's English comprehension is often limited. I have found it helpful to present effective teaching skills in demonstration videos. "Role modeling" by the trainer delivers the message, "teach the way I teach."

In addition to describing teaching, provide an opportunity for FTA's to observe, analyze, and "practice" the skills required in teaching. It is helpful to point out that while there are a variety of teaching styles, there is a commonality in teaching techniques. Opportunities to observe experienced TA's in the actual classroom is one way to present content. Discussions of the observed videos and classroom sessions can center on what the observers saw that was effective and what could be improved. These discussions sharpen the new FTA's ability to analyze what went well and what did not in the teaching situation. Problem solving, i.e. analyzing, how they would react in a similar situation to improve it, builds their confidence in handling varied teaching situations.

Finally, the opportunity to practice these same situations in role playing exercises again brings us to the next phase.

Phase #4 - Practicing a Repetoire of Skills

Practice is the key to learning mastery. With time constraints, it would be better to cover less content thoroughly with greater FTA opportunities to practice, than to tell everything about teaching and have no time for supervised practice. The repetoire of skills that I recommend FTA's practice are the ones most commonly needed in their first TA assignment. The classification of Teaching Skills targets these skill areas.

Role playing provides practice in introducing oneself to the class, setting the goals or agenda at the beginning of a section, presenting a new concept, responding to questions, or rehearsing problematic teaching situations anticipated by the FTA's.

The basic pattern of practice exercises that I found useful is:

1) an informal presentation for 2 -3 minutes on a topic of the FTA's choice;

2) a presentation for 3-5 minutes explaining a concept or term from the FTA's discipline (a first trial);

3) an improvement on the first 3-5 minute presentation above, or on the same or another topic.

Exercises 1 and 2 are, in fact, part of the phase of developing awareness described earlier. The third exercise represents an opportunity to practice the teaching techniques presented in the training. An orientation FTA training program scheduled for a day and a half will not have time for more practice exercises, based on my experience.

If the training format is orientation plus follow up workshops or seminars, then further practice exercises might include:

4) TA-student interactions - role playing office hours;

5) Lab situations - asking questions that get students to think and understand the concepts;

6) TA-student interactions - role playing anticipated problem situations in a classroom, such as handling the student who asks inappropriate, confusing, or too many questions;

7) Discussion or problem solving sections - practice encouraging effective student participation.

The FTA's should be encouraged to discuss and role play classroom situations that are specific concerns to them. Role playing is like a safe, friendly opportunity for the trial and error of experiential learning. The added advantage is the constructive feedback and chance to practice handling the presentation or problem situation again. This leads to the last phase - constructive, friendly feedback.

Phase #5 - Receiving Constructive Feedback

During this feedback phase the initial phase of establishing rapport - creating a comfortable learning environment, becomes particularly important . Another term for feedback is evaluations, exams, grades. I prefer the term "feedback" since it has less judgemental connotations. It also has a sense of information coming back so there can be self-correction.

An FTA training program is an opportunity to make the errors we all go through in learning to teach, but among a supportive group. Feedback can be handled with an FTA's viewing of their video presentation exercises, with a consultant, or in a group. Group feedback plus an opportunity for re-playing the scene or discussing the pros and cons of several presentations all at once is helpful. The presentation of feedback seems most effective when the focus is on the positive. Reinforce good behaviors by recognizing them. Turn the negatives into an examination of what could be done to improve.

Humor eases tense learning situations. A non-judgemental, accepting attitude also helps. Of course there is pressure to master the teaching skills and move into the actual classroom, but for foreign graduate students with proven academic merits, the worst that should happen if they do not pass the standards set for the FTA screening evaluation process, would be more assistance in an enjoyable FTA training program. On the other hand, if a foreign graduate student is not motivated to improve and rarely attends the training sessions, other measures may be appropriate.

The components of FTA training feedback are discussed in detail in the working papers on testing, and evaluations. Some of the feedback to FTA's may be guided by the following two handouts for evaluations.

ITAs and the Road to Communication Competence: Learning to Map a Department

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When International Teaching Assistants (ITAs) first arrive on U.S. university campuses, they likely have a number of competing needs, not the least of which concerns their role and how it affects communication with professors, peers, and undergraduate students. The need to succeed as a graduate student, coupled with the demands of teaching, becomes overwhelming when faced in a new academic culture. The purpose of this paper is to provide strategies which will assist ITAs in discovering the norms or rules of their new department and ultimately achieving communicative competence as a graduate student and ITA.

Communicative Competence

Although facility with American English is of primary importance to most ITAs, a knowledge of cultural norms, such as what to say to whom and how to say it appropriately, involves more than syntax or pronunciation. A knowledge of cultural norms and expressions that are people and context-specific is part of what Hymes (1972a) calls "communicative competence." Such "competence" is demonstrated in, e.g., the appropriate use of silence and nonverbal behaviors, as well as the proper use of turn-taking in conversation.

One aspect of communicative competence is the ability to discover and understand the norms or rules in a culture. What is permitted? What is expected? What is prohibited? In order to learn the cultural norms, ITAs first have to gather information or collect examples of communication within the community under investigation. Second, once examples are gathered, ITAs can make preliminary inferences or assumptions about the meaning of these examples to native speakers. Third, ITAs can verify their inferences and test their assumptions by comparing them with native speakers' meanings.

Gathering Information

There are two research strategies that ITAs can use in gathering information: observation and interviewing.

Observation

Observation is focused investigation as opposed to random searching. One of the most effective ways to focus investigation is to organize information in a simple framework and keep all observation notes in a journal. If observation notes are organized systematically, it is easier for ITAs to find patterns or cultural categories (e.g. when faculty members are behind their closed office doors this means they want privacy). One of the goals for collecting cultural categories is to learn from them and imitate cultural expectations.

Observation Framework

A framework must be general since there is no way for ITAs to know a priori what aspects of situations will be significant. A framework must also be brief and readily accessible. Selected components from Hymes' (1972b) "SPEAKING" mnemonic is a useful observation guide (see Table 1).

the setting including physical characteristics (e.g. size of rooms, arrangement of furniture).

the participants including faculty, staff, dean/chairperson, graduate TAs and non TAs, undergraduates, and their interrelationships.

the speech act and act sequences, the ordering of communicative acts which include compliments, apologies, excuses, thanksgivings, praises, etc.

the key or manner of vocal delivery (e.g. sarcastic, joking, serious, didactic, apologetic, etc.).

the norms or what proprieties should be observed - what is prescribed, proscribed, permitted.

the genre or speech event (e.g. joke, story, lecture, meeting, greeting).

The observations can be informal. Most likely, beginning ITAs will be participating in groups, e.g., orientation sessions. Since they allow ITAs both to participate and to observe, such sessions can ease self-consciousness ITAs might feel if they were merely outside observers. The following are possible areas of observation for each part of the framework.

Setting:

- Describe the physical characteristics of the department.
- How does it compare with other buildings on campus?
- How do participants organize themselves spatially in groups, in and out of the classroom (e.g. in rows, circles, around tables)?
- Do faculty have separate offices? Share offices? Size? Decor?
- Where are TAs located? Separate offices? All in one room?
- Do faculty have their names on their doors? By title? First and last name?
- Where are the instructional resources and supplies? New? Used?

Participants:

- What are the terms of address between faculty, between staff and faculty, between the dean/chairperson and faculty, between graduate students and faculty, between undergraduates and faculty, between graduate students and TAs, and all roles in reverse?
- Who has authority over whom? By what means?
- What clothing is "typical" for students, faculty, staff, dean/chairperson?
- How do participants use personal space (e.g. stand close or apart?) Note space for each role relationship.
- Note nonverbal behavior (e.g. gestures, posture, touching, eye contact).
- What holidays and celebrations are observed by the group? Individuals?

- What range of behaviors is considered "work" for participants? What range is "play?"
- Are roles for participants clearly defined and how?

Speech Act:

- Note message form and content in the asking of questions, conversational turn-taking, etc.
- What comprises a compliment? An excuse? An apology?
- Note the participants in these speech acts and their role relationship.

Key:

- Note the tone of voice of participants when they talk.
- Are there any external signs or nonverbals that provide cues to serious talk or joking talk?
- Note vocal differences in face-to-face communication, telephone communication, memos. Note participant roles in each.
- Do graduate students change their vocal manner when talking to professors? Peers?
- Do professors change their vocal manner when talking to graduate students? Peers? Undergraduates?

Norms:

- How is time used? Do classes or meetings start on time?
- Read any publicity documents about the department/campus. What are the public norms for the department? University? (e.g. publishing is of paramount importance or teaching or participating in conferences, etc.).
- What are the expectations for TAs? Graduates? Undergraduates? Staff? Faculty? Administration?
- Listen to what is said informally about expectations. Note similarities and/or discrepancies between "public" and "private" communication.
- What is prohibited behavior? (e.g. TAs dating their students, talking back to professors, being late to class)?
- What is permissible behavior (e.g. being late to class, talking about professors with other TAs and graduates)?

- Are there departmental practices associated with holidays or celebrations? What are they? How are they performed?

Genre:

- Listen to stories about past students, professors, etc. Why are these individuals important?
- Note how participants are greeted - formally, informally.
- What comprises the "lecture" genre?
- What beliefs or values are associated with departmental meetings? Graduate student meetings?

Interviewing

The basic premise in interviewing is to listen, learn, and ask questions. How people think about their world is revealed in how they talk about it. The details of "informant" talk are crucial for ITAs to notate; to learn how informants give information, how they describe, clarify, ask questions is to learn the patterns.

The framework used in observation will aid ITAs in interviewing as well. Participants can be interviewed informally by having ITAs ask questions of experienced TAs. Suggest that ITAs talk to peers with which they are comfortable. Second or third year graduate students and/or experienced ITAs usually have a history of departmental "ins and outs" and may be willing to help newcomers. It may be wise to remind ITAs at this point that U.S. students and faculty thrive on questions and answers. The process of learning is a constant cycle of gathering information and asking questions in order to check perceptions.

Inferencing

Once ITAs observe and interview participants, they will have a body of information and may have already made preliminary inferences as to how the department operates and expectations for participant roles. ITAs have spent time in other academic cultures so this process may be quite rapid. The next step is to manage their large collection of information by scanning observation and interview notes for categories, such as: X is a kind of Y (e.g. kinds of questions undergraduate students ask, kinds of attitudes undergraduates have

toward learning, kinds of undergraduate student behaviors in instructional settings, kinds of graduate seminar behaviors, etc. See Table 2. Instruct ITAs to look for cultural themes that provide insight into cultural values or beliefs (e.g. kinds of questions undergraduate students ask may become "undergraduates ask questions informally"). Have ITAs make a list of possible themes, a cultural inventory, and note if there have been any inconsistencies between observation and interview data. All categories, patterns, and themes need to be recorded in order to be verified by native speakers.

Verifying Inferences

As ITAs gather information, narrow and focus the information by making preliminary inferences, the next step will be to verify or compare perceptions with trusted peers, staff, or professors. Senior TAs or ITA "mentors" might be possible choices. Many departments encourage mentoring relationships with incoming graduate students and "veteran" graduates. If such a relationship is not fostered initially, ITAs can observe the participants who are most active in the department. If there is a list of publications or conference papers available, for example, ITAs should check to see which graduate students are productive and if those students would be willing to lend support to new ITAs. Of course, student productivity can be interpreted in many ways. Who are the TAs and ITAs who have high undergraduate student ratings? These are examples of norms that need to be discovered in each individual department/university.

About three months into the academic year, ITAs should have several verifiable norms and several preliminary inferences yet to be tested. The entire process follows a cyclical pattern to be repeated many times as ITAs gain confidence in communicating in their new culture.

Summary and Conclusion

In this paper several suggestions have been given to assist ITAs in discovering the norms of their new academic department in order to achieve communicative competence as a graduate student and ITA. In order to discover and understand the norms in a new

culture, ITAs can gather information or collect examples of communication within their new department. ITAs can then make preliminary inferences or assumptions about the meaning of their examples and; next, ITAs can verify their inferences by testing their assumptions with native speakers in the department. The additional strategies of observing and interviewing assist the ITA in the cyclical process of mapping a department culture.

The gathering of information, the making of inferences, and the verifying of inferences does not end once the graduate degree is earned; observation and interviewing continues. It should be noted, however, that observing and interviewing assumes ability in such skills as listening, questioning, and perceiving. ITA trainers may choose to incorporate seminar sessions in these skill areas. Although listening, questioning, and perceiving will take practice, such practice will benefit ITAs throughout their academic careers and beyond.

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Table 1. Observation Notes Organized into "SPEAKING" Framework

Setting	Participants	Speech Act	Key	Norms	Genre
Lab	15 students and ITA.	Description of current lab assignment.	Didactic matter-of-fact.	Students remain seated. ITA moves freely around lab.	Brief lecture.
Students sit at long tables. ITA in front of room.	Students in dependent role. ITA in dominant role.	Clarification questions. Q. A. Q. A.	Concern.	Students can ask questions at any point during the class hour.	Question/ answer section.

Table 2 Focusing Categories Adaption of Spradley (1980).

X is a kind of Y:

kinds of groups
kinds of activities for graduate students
kinds of activities for faculty
kinds of activities for undergraduates
kinds of activities for graduate teaching assistants
kinds of attitudes
kinds of relationships
kinds of questions
kinds of explanations

X is a way to Y:

ways to ask questions
ways to compare things
ways to get students' attention
ways to listen
ways to dress
ways to touch people
ways to react to students

X is a part of Y:

parts of the department's major fields of study
parts of TA duties in the department

X is a reason for Y:

reasons for students to ask questions
reasons why students want degrees
reasons for publishing

X is a stage in Y:

stages in graduate school
stages in undergraduate education

X is used for Y:

resources to use for instruction
resources to use for studying

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